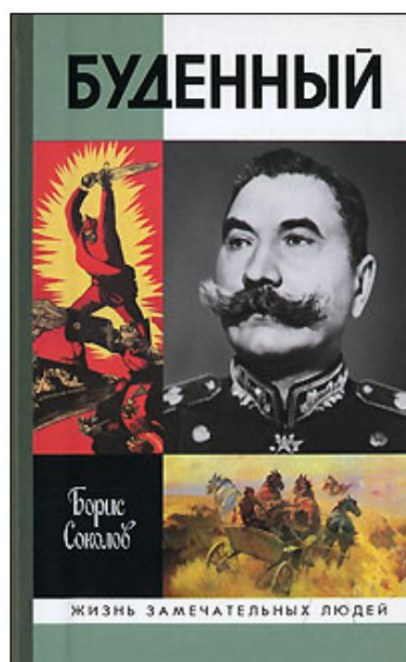


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BUDENNY: RED MURATS



Series: The Life of Remarkable People
Publisher: Molodaya gvardiya
2007

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FOREWORD

Who was Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny after all? This is still being debated. According to some, he is a living legend, commander of the First Cavalry, hero of the Civil War, an unparalleled connoisseur of horses who revived Soviet horse breeding, a brilliant cavalry tactician, a devoted servant of the Soviet government, a father to soldiers, a loving family man, a nugget from the bottom, who achieved the marshal's baton. According to others, he is a sergeant-major tyrant, whose cruelty towards his subordinates manifested itself even in the tsarist army; a man who shot his first wife in cold blood and almost personally took his second wife to the Lubyanka; an incompetent commander whose inability to conduct a modern war was clearly manifested during the years of the Great Patriotic War; the destroyer of truly folk heroes Boris Dumenko and Philip Mironov or (depending on the writer's political sympathies) the "white knights" Krasnov, Denikin and Wrangel; a rude martinet who knew only how to walk and drink with his cavalry comrades-in-arms; one of the organizers of the "great purge" in the Red Army in 1937-1938. Far from all epithets are listed here, which at different times were awarded to Semyon Mikhailovich by his friends and enemies, depending on their own political preferences. Where is the truth here? Some of these assessments are true, but something, as usual, is very far from the truth. But, one must think, it is unlikely that people would begin to sing songs about a completely useless person. Moreover, they began to sing them in the first years of Soviet power, when the official cult of Budyonny and the Cavalry had not yet taken shape. And it's not for nothing that the Red Army helmet was nicknamed "Budyonovka". As you know, this helmet, cre

Vasnetsov, was developed during the tsarist government, and it was supposed to be called the "hero", but history and the people judged otherwise. I must say that many representatives of the intelligentsia also succumbed to the charm of Budyonny - this is evidenced by the number of novels, poems, and then feature films dedicated to him and his army. Of course, many of them were created by order, but there were also many that were composed at the call of the heart. The commander-in-chief, inseparable from his horse, must have seemed to the romantically thinking creators of something like a Scythian nomad, whose coming was sung by A. Blok. It was not a sin to admire such a character, or even learn from him

"new revolutionary morality." In addition, Budyonny was indeed one of the most capable Red commanders raised by the Soviet government from the bottom. It is no coincidence that he was the only one of the cavalry commanders who successfully went through the entire Civil War without suffering a single real defeat, unlike, say, D.P. Zhloba or G.D. Gai, did not allow anti-Soviet speeches, like F.K. Mironov, or the complete disintegration of their troops, like B. M.

Dumenko (although it should be recognized that the Budyonny Cavalry more than once approached the edge beyond which decomposition could turn into chaos). In order to keep in hand such an uncontrollable mass as the Budennovites, a remarkable talent as an organizer, tribune, and leader was required. These qualities could not have been possessed by ordinary mediocrity, which some of his ill-wishers seek to represent Budyonny. In his own way, Semyon Mikhailovich was a complex and contradictory personality. He faithfully served by no means the most democratic political regime and, due to his position, could not remain aloof from the repressions carried out in the country and in the army. However, at the same time, he always took care of his comrades and cavalry soldiers and, when possible, took his punishing hand away from them. Yes, he beat his subordinates, but he did not shoot them unless absolutely necessary. The main thing was that Semyon Mikhailovich thought of real life only on horseback, in his native Don ste

the interwar period, which felt like a kind of last knight who would have nothing to do on the battlefield if the cavalry disappeared from him. World War II, the war of machines, was no longer his war. The

chivalrous spirit of Budyonny was combined with a sober calculation. He was one of the few senior military men who were lucky enough to escape the repressions of 1937-1941. And the matter here is probably explained not only by his firm support of Stalin (Tukhachevsky also never opposed Stalin and unconditionally supported his measures to prepare for a big war). An equally important role was played by the fact that Semyon Mikhailovich managed to present himself to Iosif Vissarionovich as a narrow-minded person, who had no political ambitions and was in no way suitable for the role of the new Bonaparte. Because of this, he survived. Obviously, back in the years of the Civil War, Budyonny realized that under the Bolsheviks it was deadly dangerous to get into politics. And he superbly played the role of a dashing grunt who, for the Soviet government and personally Comrade Stalin, will blow off any head. Then, after the Great Patriotic War, he just as skillfully assumed the guise of a living legend that embodied the spirit of "that one civilian." He was welcomed by all the rulers who changed in the Soviet country, from Lenin to Brezhnev. Everyone needed him, none of them fell into disgrace. So, in his own way, Semyon Mikhailovich turned out to be a very good politician, although, of course, he never laid claim to the laurels of Napoleon - neither on the battlefield, nor in political arenas. At the same time, only the revolution of 1917 and the Soviet regime elevated Budyonny to marshal heights. If it weren't for the revolution, the son of a peasant from the Don non-residents in his career would never have advanced further than the sergeant-major, if only because of a very modest education. With luck, Semyon Mikhailovich saved up money and, after retiring, opened a small stud farm, in which he would have lived in abundance, but not in glory. The revolution and the Bolsheviks made him a historical figure. Of course, time made Budyonny. But Semyon Mikhailovich himself shaped the historical time - not only during the Civil

In this book, I will try to tell as truthfully as possible about the historical deeds of Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny, about the marshal's private life and about the facets of his personality - both light and dark. Whether it succeeded is for the reader to judge.

CHAPTER ONE CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

During the Civil War, Soviet newspapers called Budyonny "the first saber of the young republic, the devoted son of the commune." The Whites called him "Red Murat", in honor of the brave commander of the Napoleonic cavalry, the Poles - "Soviet Mackensen" after the German general, who broke through the Russian front in Galicia in 1915 as swiftly as the First Cavalry Army broke into Poland five years later. There is something in all these definitions, but none of them can be considered complete. Budyonny is Budyonny, the son of his era and his homeland, "father of the Quiet Don." The Don steppes have long been famous for their horses and dashing riders who pranced on them. Here, in the middle of the Don steppes, on the Kozyurin farm of the village of Platovskaya, on April 13 (25), 1883, the future commander of the First Cavalry, Marshal and three times Hero of the Soviet Union Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny was born in the family of a farm laborer Mikhail Ivanovich Budyonny and his wife Malanya Nikitichna. Even during his lifetime, this man became a living legend. Songs were sung about him, cities, villages and collective farms were named after him. Even the breed of horses, bred on the Don at the end of the 19th century, was later called "Budenovskaya".

For Semyon Mikhailovich, the fame of the creator of the Soviet cavalry, a dashing grunt rider, a major commander of the Civil War, and finally, a caring and fair "father-commander" was firmly entrenched. Like any myth, this legend in some ways correctly conveys the real image of Budyonny, but in some ways it deforms it very much. We will try to restore the main milestones of the true biography of the commander of the First Cavalry, we will try to understand what kind of person he was, what pushed him into

revolution, what role he played in the development of the Red Army, what role he played

in private life. Budyonny's parents were not Cossacks, but non-residents, that is, people who settled on the Don from Russian and Ukrainian provinces. The grandfather of the future commander left his homeland, the Kharkov settlement of the Biryuchinsky district of the Voronezh province, shortly after the abolition of serfdom due to the fact that he could not pay taxes for the land he received. Judging by his surname, he came from suburban Ukrainians - immigrants from Polish Ukraine who moved to Russia in the 17th century. In search of a better life, Ivan Budyonny, together with his wife and three young children, went to the region of the Don Cossacks. Nonresidents on the Don were second-class people in comparison with the Cossacks, endowed with class privileges, the main of which was the right to own the fertile Don land. Nonresidents, however, could not acquire land, so Budyonny had to work as laborers for rich Cossacks. Soon, however, the father of the

future army commander became a small merchant, who was called a peddler. In May 1875, Mikhail Ivanovich Budyonny married Malanya Nikitichna Yemchenko, who also came from former serfs and, judging by her last name, was also Ukrainian. Although the Ukrainian language, I note, none of the spouses knew. This is not surprising - at that time in the Russian Empire not only such a language officially did not exist, but also the word "Ukraine" - only the name "Little Russia" was used. The young people settled on the Kozyurin farm near the village of Platovskaya. In the family of Mikhail Ivanovich, in addition to Semyon, there were seven more children - four brothers and three sisters, of whom he was the second in seniority. First, Grigory was born, then Semyon, and then Fedor, Emelyan, Tatiana, Anastasia, Denis and Leonid went on. Later, Emelyan, Denis and

Leonid commanded squadrons in the Cavalry. But with Gregory, bad luck came out. But more on that later. In 1890, the Budyonnys tried to move to Stavropolitsina, but they did not stay there

Platovskaya, on the banks of the Manych River. Having saved up some money through trade, Mikhail Ivanovich was able to rent land, albeit on the extortionate terms of share-cropping - the Cossack landowner had to give half of the crop. In 1892, Semyon began working as an errand boy for the merchant of the first guild, Yatskin, and before that, he had already helped his father plow the land. He stayed with Yatskin for several years - he brought goods to the shop, ran with errands, and cleaned up the merchant's house. After Yatskin, young Budyonny had a chance to work as a blacksmith's assistant. His father was respected among his fellow villagers - he was an elected headman of non-residents, stood up for them before the local Cossack chieftain. This, by the way, proves that the Budyonnys were not completely seedy poor people. Rather - from more or less strong middle peasants. Kulaks usually did not go to public positions - all their time was taken up by the economy - but they were never elected to be without trousers either. Since he could not set up his own economy, where can he represent the public interests! In the Budyonny family, they knew how to have fun in the evenings, despite the hard working days. My father played the balalaika well, and Semyon played the harmonica. Passion for accordion Semyon Mikhailovich kept for life. Stalin appreciated his game, and this contributed a lot to Budyonny's career. Although from an early age Semyon Mikhailovich had to work for a piece of bread, he always found time to indulge in his beloved passion - horses. His fellow villager Konstantin Fedorovich Novikov recalled: "Semyon loved horses from an early age. On Shrovetide, we usually had competitions - we had to pick up our cap from the ground at full gallop and put it on our heads, gallop under the horse's belly and sit on the other side. Semyon was always the first here." By the age of 17, Budyonny was one of the best riders in the village. And he received the first award in his life, albeit a rather modest one. In the summer of 1900, the Minister of War, General A. N. Kuropatkin, visited Platovskaya village. In his honor, races were arranged with cutting down vines and stuffed animals. Semyon Budyonny spoke from non-residents - he famous

went around everyone and came to the finish line first. Semyon already then knew how to squeeze all the strength out of the horse, but in such a way that the horse remained in the ranks. Kuropatkin awarded the winner with a silver ruble. Whether it really was hard to say. Documents, of course, could not be preserved - the minister would not have prepared an estimate for each award ruble. And we know about this episode only from the words of Semyon Mikhailovich himself. And he, as it turns out, often liked to brag, and especially many fantasies came from the pen of his collaborators about the first period of his biography - before serving in the

Red Army. Later, Semyon was a greaser and stoker on the locomobile threshing machine of the merchant Yatskin, and then he even seemed to have grown to the position of a machinist. The latter, by the way, is doubtful. After all, his education was only primary, and the work of a machinist still required certain technical knowledge. As the daughter of Marshal Nina recalled, "when Grigory left, dad became the eldest of the sons. To begin with, he was given as a boy to the shop of the merchant Yatskin. Dad was an interesting boy, and Yatskin's daughters messed around with him a lot ... In the fifties, they called him and asked for help. They wanted to buy a car. Dad helped them - at one time, the Yatskin sisters taught him to read and write, and mathematics, and he remembered well. Nina Semyonovna mentioned the emigration of her brother Semyon Grigory. This fact later, when Budyonny became one of the leaders of the Red Army, could greatly damage his career. After all, Semyon Mikhailovich would have appeared in the questionnaire in the second half of the 30s, a very dangerous column - the presence of relatives abroad. Yes, not some distant ones, the seventh water on jelly, not a second cousin's nephew, but a real brother. However, apparently, Semyon Mikhailovich managed to hide his brother's emigration from both the NKVD and the personnel officers of the People's Commissariat of Defense. As it later became known, in 1902, Semyon's older brother Grigory emigrated overseas - first to Argentina, and then to the United States. He worked as a laborer for a German colonist, went with him to another continent and already there married his widow. The commander's

the correspondence of his family with the family of Semyon Mikhailovich was interrupted. It can be seen that the Chekists did not take care of Budyonny too closely, if the connection with foreign relatives was not revealed. But then, at the beginning of the 20th century, all this was still far away. At the beginning of 1903, Semyon got married in the Platovskaya church with a Cossack woman, Nadezhda Ivanovna, one of the first beauties of the neighboring village. And already on September 15, 1903 he was called up for military service. When Semyon left for the army, his mother plucked an immortelle flower near the outskirts and said: "May this immortelle save your life." And this wish came true as written. For all his long combat life, Semyon Mikhailovich was never wounded by a saber blow - the ability to ride well and brilliant possession of edged weapons helped. The call took place in the Biryuchinsky district of the Voronezh province, where Semyon Mikhailovich's grandfather was from and where his father received a passport. The family remained assigned to this county, although they had long lived in other places. They identified Budyonny in a dragoon marching company, located in the county town of Biryuch. In the tsarist army, as later in the Soviet one from the middle of the 20th century, hazing flourished, and in the first years of service, Semyon fully knew its charms. But he showed himself the first in horse riding. Once, one of the non-commissioned officers, wanting to play a trick on a skilled rider, asked him to show his class on an unbroken stallion named Angel. This Angel turned out to be a real devil and strove to throw off the rider. But Semyon Mikhailovich was not like that - he kept in the saddle like a glove. And then the distraught stallion, biting the bit, rushed to the barbed fence, but Budyonny gave spurs, pulled on the reins and jumped over the fence like a barrier at the races. After that, the shocked Angel calmed down and no longer bucked. And Semyon Mikhailovich was strongly respected by his colleagues. The old-timers no longer risked mocking him, especially since the officers noticed the craftsman and began to ask to go around their horses. When the Russo-Japanese War began, Budyonny with a group of dragoons was sent to replenish the 46th Cossack regiment in Manchuria, which guarded the rear of the Russian army. The regiment did not have to

gangs of hunghuz who robbed Russian carts. In one of the skirmishes, Budyonny received his first light wound. After the war, he remained to serve in the Primorsky Dragoon Regiment of Danish King Christian IX, located in the village of Razdolny near Vladivostok (the monarch of distant Denmark was his honorary chief as father-in-law of Emperor Alexander III). The first Russian revolution practically did not affect Primorye, and the dragoons learned about the turbulent events in European Russia only from newspapers. In the fall of 1906, Budyonny distinguished himself in exercises by capturing a battery of a mock enemy. The regiment commander sent an intelligent dragoon, a brilliant connoisseur of horses, to the St. Petersburg equestrian school, which trained instructors for cavalry regiments.

On January 16, 1907, Budyonny arrived in St. Petersburg, for the first time being in the capital of the empire. The equestrian school was located in the building of the Higher Officer Cavalry School on Shpalernaya. Here Semyon Mikhailovich learned the art of riding from James Phyllis himself, the world famous British jockey, who led the cavalry school since 1898 and was promoted to colonel in the Russian army. Budyonny turned out to be one of the best in his release; from Phyllis he learned all the ways of subordinating the horse to the will of the rider. At school, the future head of the First Cavalry also got acquainted with the great variety of horse breeds existing in the world. Probably, Budyonny was familiar with the book "Fundamentals of dressage and riding", first published in Russian in 1901. It was reprinted after the revolution, the last time - in 1941, with the blessing of Semyon Mikhailovich. In May 1908, Budyonny was promoted to junior non-commissioned officer. The students at the school carried guards in the Winter Palace, where

Budyonny had a chance to see Emperor Nicholas II more than once and even shook hands with him. After the first year of training, Semyon took first place in dressage competitions, which gave him the right to complete the second year of training and the opportunity to remain at the school as a riding instructor. But in the summer of that year, Budyonny chose to return to the Primorsky Dragoon Regiment and serve there overtime. Already in September for success in

teaching young dragoons to ride Budyonny, who served as a regimental rider, was awarded the rank of senior non-commissioned officer. At one time, he also served as the squadron commander. Budyonny proudly wrote to his father: "I told you that I would become a non-commissioned officer, and, as you can see, I became one." Semyon Mikhailovich always achieved his goal. Budyonny's son-in-law, the famous actor Mikhail Derzhavin, argued: "They were not all as unpretentious as it is now commonly believed. I somehow come to Lenkom for a rehearsal, and Anatoly Vasilievich Efros asks me: "Misha, but tell me, did Budyonny read War and Peace?" It seemed strange to me. "Okay," I say, "I'll ask." I come to his dacha and so quietly ask: "Semyon Mikhailovich, have you read War and Peace?" He says: "For the first time, son, I read Lev Nikolaevich during his lifetime." It turns out that he read it during the Manchurian War, until 1910, before the death of Leo Tolstoy. He generally read a lot, loved

Chekhov. About "War and Peace" Budyonny said: "Every Russian person, especially a military man, should read this thing more than once or twice. Personally, I can't be indifferent to this novel." "Kholstomer" of the same Tolstoy he quoted by heart. As you can see, at the school, riders were taught not only dressage, but there was plenty of leisure time on the eastern Russian outskirts, which was conducive to reading. Semyon Mikhailovich read something, but he did not write very competently, as evidenced by his handwritten notes relating to the period of the Civil War. There was a lack of education. In the summer of 1914, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, Budyonny finally received leave with the right to leave the unit and visited his native places. Daughter Nina recalled: "His wife turned out to be a good worker, and my father's dad, my grandfather, was pleased with his daughter-in-law. But there were all sorts of circumstances ... And even then to say: how long can a woman live without a husband? It can be assumed that Budyonny in St. Petersburg, and then in the Far East, led a far from monastic life. Yes, and this time the legal spouses had a chance to stay together for no more than a month - the First

Budyonny and his first wife are true love - after all, they spent so many years apart. It seems that this wedding was generally carried out by agreement of the parents, which was then a common thing in the peasant and Cossack environment. The post of regimental rider was very profitable. Budyonny rode horses to officers, and for decent money. Daughter Nina recalled that her father "was thinking about a stud farm. He ... after the revolution, the money was gone ... He earned by riding horses for all officers. Dad saved up for his dream, and they borrowed from him - because they drank well and played cards ... There was not God knows what kind of money, but he would have had enough for the initial capital for a small horse farm. It turns out that Semyon Mikhailovich also lent money, most likely at interest. And thanks to a sober lifestyle, they did not have to spend especially. So the "red Murat" turned out to be a born businessman. This once again proves that the Budyonnys were not poor people, since Semyon Mikhailovich in just six years - from the moment he graduated from the equestrian school to the start of World War I - managed to accumulate capital sufficient to purchase a stud farm, albeit a small one. So the Bolshevik revolution with its nationalization of banks hit hard on the financial well-being of the future marshal. And the Bolsheviks themselves should not have caused much sympathy in the future Soviet marshal. However, the logic of the Civil War on the Don, the logic of confrontation between non-residents and the Cossacks forever led Budyonny to the Bolshevik camp. Where, by the way, he achieved the greatest success in the field of horse breeding. Budyonny loved horses and knew well how to handle them. Usually, graduates of the St. Petersburg officer school, after being transferred to the reserve, were gladly taken as trainers to stud farms. The best dressage masters were hard to find. However, Semyon Mikhailovich was not going to leave the reserve. Recall that he was going to open a horse farm, albeit small, but his own. And he used the army service in order to accumulate the necessary initial capital. It is possible that by the summer of 1914 he had already accumulated sufficient

sum and went on vacation to his native land just to look for a suitable plant. Nobody forbade non-residents to own a stud farm on the Don, and it was also possible to keep it on rented land. After all, horses were the main value, not land. It is possible that soon Budyonny would have retired from the army. If there were no war and revolution, Semyon Mikhailovich, quite possibly, would have become a successful horse breeder of an average hand. And if the business went well, then, quite possibly, it would have become a millionaire, but it certainly would not have made it into history. However, such a peaceful course of life was prevented by the war and the revolution that followed it, which immortalized the name of Budyonny. The news of the beginning of the war found Semyon Mikhailovich in Platovskaya. He never returned to his regiment. He was sent to Armavir, to the reserve regiment of the Caucasian Cavalry Division, intended for operations against Germany. Already on August 15, marching squadrons headed for the front, in the area of the Polish city of Kalisz, west of Warsaw. In early September, Budyonny ended up in the 18th Seversky Dragoon Regiment of the Caucasian Cavalry Division as a platoon non-commissioned officer of the 5th

squadron. In the same position, he ended the First World War. Budyonny fought bravely and skillfully, but later official biographers, and Semyon Mikhailovich himself in his memoirs *The Path Traveled*, exaggerated and exaggerated his exploits on the fronts of the First World War, many of which are not documented. According to the law of construction of the heroic myth, the hero must always be a hero. And in his early youth, when he wins the races in the presence of the Minister of War himself, and during the war years, when God himself ordered him to acquire a full St. George bow, and, of course, in his finest hour, during the Civil War, when he allegedly became Soviet cavalry and played a decisive role in the victories of the Red Army over Denikin, the White Poles and Wrangel. True, during the years of the Great Patriotic War, Semyon Mikhailovich turned out to have nothing to brag about - here the most apologetic-minded biographers were powerless. Therefore, about

The Patriotic War is mentioned only briefly, emphasizing only his role as the last commander of the Red Army cavalry, which again largely boiled down to taking care of people and horses, but by no means to planning military operations, in which Budyonny was never strong at all. According to Semyon Mikhailovich, he accomplished his first feat near the Polish village of Brzeziny. On November 8, 1914, in the morning, the cavalry moved to the edge of the forest half a kilometer from Brzeziny and began covert surveillance. A German convoy was ambushed by Budyonny's platoon. The dragoons, having lost only two killed, took prisoners and several wagons with weapons and uniforms. Budyonny received the insignia of the St. George Cross - soldier George 4th degree. His portrait seemed to have been printed in newspapers - however, meticulous biographers never found these newspapers. But soon the award allegedly had to part. At the end of November 1914, the Caucasian Cavalry Division was transferred to the Caucasian Front. In the German colony Alexanderdorf near Tiflis, where the regiment was located, Budyonny seriously injured another non-commissioned officer, Khestanov, in a fight with a fist. With a relatively small stature (172 cm), Semyon Mikhailovich had great physical strength and with a fist he easily knocked a person down. So a fight with one of the non-commissioned officers could well have taken place, but everything that followed is the fruit of Semyon Mikhailovich's creative imagination. On December 3, the court-martial allegedly sentenced Budyonny to the deprivation of "George". Before the formation of the dragoons, a cross was torn off from him. From a more serious punishment Budyonny, according to him, captain Krym-Shamkhalov-Sokolov, the squadron commander, consoled his beloved non-commissioned officer: "Do not despair, Semyon. You are a fair person. You have cunning, ingenuity and strength, and crosses are a thing to come." In this story, the only thing that can be true is that the squadron commander, who had an obvious sympathy for Budyonny (he probably rode his horse), hushed up the case with the beating of Khestanov. But there was no trial of Budyonny, as we will see

The next feat, again according to Budyonny, was as follows. In January 1915, near the city of Van in Turkey, his platoon captured a Turkish three-gun battery. For this, Semyon Mikhailovich was allegedly returned "George". In January

1916, the Caucasian division participated in the campaign of the expeditionary force of General H. N. Baratov to Persia. Near the city of Mendelidzh, Budyonny with his platoon covered the withdrawal of the regiment, held back the Turks for three days, and during one of the counterattacks he captured an enemy officer. So he earned George 3rd degree. All this is again from

the words of Semyon Mikhailovich himself, and he is a rather unreliable source. Doubts also creep in because his exploits turn out to be painfully effective - he takes prisoners and captures batteries. Usually, soldiers were introduced to the "George" for much less high-profile feats. For example, this is what one of the relatives of the Budennovsky squadron commander, the Kabardian prince Krym-Shamkhalov, who served in the 3rd hundred of the Circassian cavalry regiment of the Caucasian native cavalry division, received "George" of the 4th degree for: "Junior officer Magomet-Geri Krymshamkhalov (IV degree - No. 183986).

From January 22 to January 24, 1915, near the village of Krivka, at height 706, he repeatedly transmitted reports and orders to the advanced trenches. The above-named rider showed special composure and courage on January 24, when there was heavy shooting from the enemy all that day, and only thanks to his courage he fulfilled the task assigned to him, although he was in danger of life. By the way, Mohammed-Geri ended the First World War as a cornet, holder of the Order of St. George of the 4th degree and St. George's arms, then fought in the White Army, rose to the rank of colonel, and emigrated. It is possible that he had a chance to cross checkers in battles with

Semyon Mikhailovich himself. In February 1916, already in Mesopotamia, near the town of Bekube, Budyonny's platoon was sent on a raid behind enemy lines. After 22 days, he returned with prisoners and trophies. This time Semyon Mikhailovich's chest was adorned by Georgy 2nd degree. Under the Persian city of Kermanshah, the division again fought defensive battles for three months.

George 1st degree. This happened in March 1916, when he captured six Turkish soldiers and a non-commissioned officer with four dragoons. According to Budyonny, he became the owner of a full St. George's bow - four crosses and four St. George's medals. True, for what he received medals, it remained unclear. His apologists spread rumors that all four degrees of the medal were automatically assigned to holders of all four degrees of the St. George Cross. However, there is no such thing either in the statute of the St. George Cross or in the statute of the St. George Medal, adopted in 1913. It only stated that the lower ranks, having the 3rd and 4th degrees of the St. George Cross, when awarded the medal "For Diligence", were presented directly to the neck silver medal, and those with the 1st and 2nd degrees of the St. George Cross - directly to the gold neck medal. The medal "For Diligence" was just replaced by the St.

George's medal soon, but still this medal did not automatically complain to the holders of the St. George's Crosses. It's just that when they were presented for the St. George medal, this medal of a higher degree immediately complained. Below I will give more evidence that Budyonny could not have been the owner of all four degrees of the St. George Cross. Now I will confine myself to one, but quite convincing. According to the statute, when transferred to the reserve, ranks awarded the 2nd degree badge were presented to the rank of ensign (or corresponding to it), and those awarded the 1st degree were presented to the same rank when awarded. Budyonny in the tsarist army, at least, according to him, did not rise above the senior non-commissioned officer. Meanwhile, if in the spring of 1916 he was the owner of all four degrees of the St.

George Cross, then there was plenty of time for promotion to ensign. There seemed to be no reason for Semyon Mikhailovich to hide his production as ensign in the Soviet period. After all, Ivan Tyulenev, the real owner of the full bow of St. George's crosses, did not hide, for example, this fact of his biography, in the future - Budyonny's comrade-in-arms in the Cavalry. All Tyulenev's crosses, unlike Budyonnovsk's, are fully confirmed in the

Kargopol Dragoon Regiment. Ivan Vladimirovich was promoted to ensign, and then sent to the ensign school for promotion to the first officer rank, but, as it seems, did not have time to finish it because of the October Revolution. By the way, the double surname of the Budyonovsky squadron commander, captain Krym-Shamkhalov-Sokolov, was probably due to the fact that he adopted Orthodoxy, and with him a Russian surname. If this is so, then most likely it was the captain of the 18th Seversky Dragoon Regiment Mikhail Avgustovich Sokolov, who was awarded the 4th Order of St. George on April 7, 1915.

degree.

I think that the explanation in the case of Budyonovsk memoirs can be as follows. Semyon Mikhailovich added additional crosses and medals to himself in order to look the first in terms of the number of awards both among fellow villagers and among future fellow soldiers in the Civil War. Colleagues in the 18th Seversky Dragoon Regiment were not there - they did not call Don non-residents there, at least from the district where Budyonny lived. He ended up in this regiment purely by chance, because at the time the war began he was on vacation, far from the regiment in which he served. So no one could convict him of appropriating crosses and medals that did not belong to him. According to the testimony of relatives and friends, the three times Hero of the Soviet Union Budyonny appreciated the St. George Crosses more than all his awards, considering them only a real award. Interestingly, the wearing of St. George signs in Soviet times was not encouraged at all, since they depicted a portrait of Emperor Nicholas II. Our hero did not wear them either, but he kept them at home in a place of honor and more than once proudly showed them to guests. Budyonny learned about the February Revolution in the Persian port of Enzali, from where soldiers were sent home after the completion of the Mesopotamian expedition. The 18th Seversky Dragoon Regiment was stationed near Tiflis, where he was sworn in to the Provisional Government and elections for soldiers' committees were held. Budyonny, according to him, was elected chairman of the squadron committee and a member of the regiment. And on July 15, 1917, Semyon Mikhailovich was allegedly elected chairman of the regimental

committee and deputy chairman of the divisional. For some time he had to be at the head of the divisional committee instead of the sick chairman - the regiment was then already in Minsk. On July 16, in the building of the Minsk Soviet, Budyonny met the Bolshevik Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze, who at that time lived under the false name of Mikhailov, since before the revolution he was on the police wanted list, and even now, after the July Bolshevik putsch, he could fear arrest. Frunze worked as a representative of the union of zemstvos and cities for the supply of the Western Front (front-line soldiers semi-contemptuously called them "Zemgusars").

Then, in the summer of the 17th, Frunze-Mikhailov was the chairman of the Council of Peasant Deputies of the Minsk and Vilna provinces, a member of the executive committee of the Minsk City Council and the front committee of the armies of the Western Front. In the future, according to Semyon Mikhailovich, he and Frunze became friends, and this friendship was preserved until the death of Mikhail Vasilyevich. At the same time, there is no evidence from Frunze of his close friendship with Budyonny.

And according to their biographies and views, they were very different people, starting with nationality. One is a non-resident, Russian, peasant son, the other is a Moldavian, the son of a military paramedic. One with a primary education, the other studied for several years at the St. Petersburg Polytechnic Institute, from where he went into the revolution. Until the autumn of 1917, one of them did not show any sympathy for the revolution and did not engage in any political activity, but, on the contrary, dreamed of his own horse farm. The other is a Bolshevik with pre-revolutionary experience, a member of the RSDLP since 1904, an ascetic who devotes himself to the cause of the revolution. One is a passionate lover of horses, the other is completely indifferent

to horses. It would seem, what do they have in common? True, psychologists and historians have long noticed that flashy opposites often converge in friendship. Let us recall how Pushkin wrote about the friendship between Onegin and Lensky: "They got along. Wave and stone, poetry and prose, ice and fire are not so different from each other. But, I note, Pushkin's heroes were still people of the same circle, in

one subordinate to the other, in contrast to Budyonny, who was always compelled in his service to carry out Frunze's orders. As we will see later, in 1917, Semyon Mikhailovich and Mikhail Vasilyevich could not get to know each other. Probably, Budyonny first met Frunze only in the autumn of 1920, during the preparation of the last decisive offensive against Wrangel. At that time, by the way, sharp disagreements arose more than once between Frunze and the leadership of the First Cavalry. In the future, Budyonny, of course, also submitted to Frunze as the commander of the troops of Ukraine and the Crimea, but again, their close friendship is not reflected in the documents and testimonies of contemporaries. Rather, it can be assumed that Voroshilov communicated more with Frunze, as with an old

party comrade. In the autumn of 1917, after the failure of General Kornilov's speech, most of the officers of the Caucasian division fled and the leadership of the division passed to the soldiers' committee, in which Semyon Mikhailovich, as he notes in his memoirs,

played by no means the last role. This is the official version of Budyonny's biography during the First World War, which he defended in his oral and written memoirs.

The real biography, as it turns out, is quite different from it. As the well-known historian of the Civil War V. D. Polikarpov writes, no traces of Budyonny's participation in either the regimental or divisional committees are found: "In his autobiography, placed in the Granat Encyclopedic Dictionary, he (Budyonny. - B.S.) , that at first, until 1913, he served in the Primorsky Dragoon Regiment in the Amur Military District (Khabarovsk), after which he received leave and left for the Don region. "The imperialist war broke out," he writes further. "I didn't go to my regiment, but was assigned to the city of Armavir in the 18th dragoon reserve squadron of the Caucasian Cavalry Division." This division was either on the Turkish, or on the Austrian front, or in the Caucasus (in the vicinity of Tiflis) and in July - August 1917 was transferred to the Western Front in Minsk. It was with this regiment (18th Dragoon Seversky King

Danish Christian IX) of the Caucasian Cavalry Division are connected with the memoir fantasies of S. M. Budyonny, expressed in his statement: "I was elected chairman of the regimental committee, and soon became a member of the divisional committee", then repeated in his "Path Traveled", in the notes of N Budyonna ... in all the biographical notes published in Soviet encyclopedias, and ... on July 5, 2003, once again reinforced in ... "Help" Izvestia "", where, with all certainty, as in the Path Traveled, it is said: "In the summer of 1917 th was elected chairman of the Soldiers' Committee of the Caucasian Cavalry Division. The archive, however, preserved documents of the Caucasian Cavalry Division and the 18th Seversky Dragoon King of the Danish Christian IX Regiment, where Budyonny served in 1917. The minutes and lists of the Divisional Committee (Council of Soldiers' Deputies), unfortunately for the Budyonnovsk memoirists, also survived and allow us to clarify the following. On July 17, 1917 (i.e., before the division was transferred from the Caucasian front to the Western one), Ensign Olshevsky was the chairman of the committee; after the re-election of the committee upon the arrival of the division in Minsk, second lieutenant E. R. Turman becomes chairman. The same Thurman (already a lieutenant) remained chairman of the committee even after it was renamed, by decision of the congress of regimental committees, into the military revolutionary committee; On January 18, 1918, the soldier Demeshchenko was listed as chairman. Senior non-commissioned officer Ivan Zimoglyad was the chairman of the regimental committee of the 18th Seversky Dragoon King of the Danish Christian IX Regiment. S. M. Budyonny does not appear in any list, in any document at all - not only as chairman, but at least as a member or "candidate member" of the committee "(there was such a category of soldiers' elected representatives then). There is no his name in the lists of those present at the meetings of the committees, there are no traces of his participation in any public activity either in the regiment or outside it. It must be said that the divisional committee of the Caucasian Cavalry Division did indeed take an active political position, but it was not at all the same as Budyonny later writes. Here is the minute

October 29, 1917. According to the report of the chairman of the divisional committee Thurman (he is also a member of the Committee for the Salvation of the Revolution of the Western Front), a resolution was adopted: "1) The Caucasian Cavalry Division unanimously condemns the insane attempt of a handful of adventurers to seize power by force of arms ... and therefore expresses its full readiness to crush the uprising with all its might. 2) The Divisional Committee approves all actions taken to restore order in the city of Minsk by parts of the division under the leadership of the Committee for the Salvation of the Revolution, the head of the division and the presidium of the divisional committee ... "The loyalty of the division to the existing government was one of the reasons for its transfer from the Caucasian to the Western Front in July - August 1917 to suppress the revolutionary centers, primarily the Minsk Soviet and the military Bolshevik organization. The division carried out this punitive service successfully and without any hesitation, contrary to the fictions of Budyonny. V. D. Polikarpov sums up: "Neither the military organization of the Bolsheviks of the Western Front, nor the Minsk party organization, as well as the leaders of the Bolsheviks of the city, region and front M. V. Frunze and A. F. Myasnikov, no connections with the divisional committee through S Budyonny, on whom, according to his stories, "the mood of the divisional committee largely depended," could not be identified and could not be given any instructions. The episodes of disarmament described by Budyonny in his memoirs and repeated in the apologetic writings of other authors, allegedly at the direction of M.V. Frunze, of the Kornilov troops in Orsha, allegedly carried out by a brigade of the Caucasian Cavalry Division under the leadership of Budyonny, the chairman of the divisional committee, are an idle fiction. Thus, in his memoirs, Budyonny greatly "revolutionized" his biography of 1917 and made himself much more politically conscious than he actually was. In this, he was not alone among the Soviet military leaders - one can recall at least a completely fantastic biography of

war. To hide his participation in the punitive expeditions in the Caucasus during the years of the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907, with the consent of Trotsky, they came up with his dismissal from the army and emigration to Italy, where he supposedly trained as an operatic baritone, and even before the revolution, in 1904, joined the "secret socialist circle". The later memoirs of marshals G.K. Zhukov and K.K. Rokossovsky were also corrected. True, there were corrections on the little things - about the voluntary arrival of the first in the Red Army and the time of entry into the Red Guard of the second. The membership of these and other military leaders in regimental, divisional and squadron committees was also invented in order to give them revolutionary merits. But such an epic fantasy, like that of Budyonny and his writers, did not exist among other marshals. I think that until the October Revolution, Semyon Mikhailovich was not at all interested in politics, he was a zealous campaigner and hardly enthusiastically perceived the revolutionary changes that had taken place. And only the beginning of the Civil War forced him to make a certain political choice. By the way, the employees of the Russian State Military Historical Archive established that until the transfer of the Caucasian Cavalry Division to the Western Front, Budyonny was awarded only two St. George's Crosses, and also, possibly, had one or two St. George's medals. Since the division no longer participated in hostilities on the Western Front, Semyon Mikhailovich could not earn new awards in the First World War with all his desire. I note that in the photograph of 1915 Budyonny is depicted with only one George Cross and one medal. But this medal, as it seems, is not St. George's, but for participation in the Russo-Japanese War. It is difficult to say how real the exploits described in the Budyonnovsky memoirs are. It is possible that they still reflect real award performances, although not necessarily for St. George's crosses and medals. But what is known for sure is that the story of the first cross, which was then allegedly taken away from Budyonny for having traveled

colleague in the face, is pure fantasy. Such a serious disciplinary offense could not but be reflected in the order for the 18th Seversky Dragoon Regiment. However, no trace of such an order was ever found in the well-preserved regimental archive. Meanwhile, according to the statute of the St. George Cross, "those who have the St. George Cross, both employees and reserve and retired lower ranks who have fallen into a crime, are deprived of the Cross only by court order." Thus, Budyonny could not be deprived of a well-deserved reward without a trial. Probably, Semyon Mikhailovich invented this story in order to refute the stubbornly circulating rumors about his cruelty towards his subordinates during his service in the tsarist army in such a peculiar way. Budyonny wanted to prove: they say, if he beat, then only for the cause, and only such scoundrels as non-commissioned officer Khestanov, who offended ordinary soldiers. Indeed, according to Semyon Mikhailovich, the conflict occurred after the non-commissioned officer beat one of the dragoons, and when Budyonny stood up for him, Khestanov poked him in the shoulder and cursed angrily. Only then did the future commander of the First Cavalry deal a crushing blow to the offender and knock him out. Thus, by the time the Bolsheviks came to power, the future Soviet marshal was not interested in politics, he did not climb into committees, but continued to serve, trying not to succumb to revolutionary chaos. And it is unlikely that even in his wildest dreams he ascended to where his fate soon threw him.

Chapter Two ON THE FRONTS OF THE CIVIL WAR

After the October Revolution and the spontaneous demobilization of the army, Budyonny arrived in his native village on November 19, 1917. The Bolsheviks announced the nationalization of banks and the confiscation of savings located there. This hardly pleased Budyonny: the funds that he saved with such difficulty for a horse farm were gone. But, presumably, Semyon Mikhailovich did not grieve for a long time, having soberly assessed the situation. With loss of property

I had to accept it as an inevitable reality. Now we had to try to offer our combat experience to the new government, which, in any case, seemed more solid than the Provisional Government, which had not enjoyed any authority in recent months. The problem of choice was facilitated by the fact that among the opponents of the Bolsheviks there were Cossacks, and non-residents always had strained relations with them - primarily on the land issue. And besides, many Cossacks, to be honest, openly despised the "manly" and looked at non-residents as uninvited guests. The Soviet government, having equalized the rights of the non-Cossack population with the Cossacks, immediately attracted the bulk of non-residents to its side.

Most of them served in the army cavalry and over the years of the war gained combat experience no less than that of the Cossacks, and they owned a saber, pike and rifle no worse than the native sons of the Quiet Don. Budyonny always said: "Don is my land!" Now for this land it was necessary to fight with the Cossacks. On the Don, where Generals Kornilov, Alekseev and Denikin, with the support of the Don Ataman Kaledin, formed the Volunteer Army, the Civil War flared up. In this war, the nonresident and poorest Cossacks were on the side of the Bolsheviks, and the bulk of the Cossacks, albeit not without hesitation, leaned towards the whites. On January 12, 1918, Budyonny, according to him, was elected deputy

chairman of the Platovsky stanitsa Council. In February, at the Congress of Soviets in the village of Velikoknyazheskaya, Semyon Mikhailovich became a member of the Presidium of the District Council and head of the land department of the Salsky District. At the same time, red partisan detachments began to form in the district to fight the troops of the Don field ataman, General Pyotr Kharitonovich Popov. One of the detachments was headed by Budyonny. Note that this detachment entered the struggle after Ataman Kaledin committed suicide - this happened on January 29 (February 11), 1918. General Nazarov, elected as a field ataman, dismissed the government and assumed full power, but already on February 23-25, Rostov-on-Don and Novoche

As you know, after the suicide of Kaledin, several hundred officers, led by P. Kh. Popov, went to the Steppe campaign and rallied around them 1727 combat personnel, including 617 horsemen with 5 guns and 39 machine guns. Both sides used guerrilla tactics of operations associated with surprise raids and ambushes. At the end of February, Popov's Cossacks occupied Platovskaya. Semyon Mikhailovich left the village with his brother Denis, five more horsemen joined them, and soon the detachment increased to 24 people. On February 24, Budyonny made a successful night raid on Platovskaya, after which several dozen more fellow villagers joined him. At that moment, the village was occupied by a detachment of Colonel Gnilorybov, numbering up to 300 people. He was taken by surprise and retreated in a panic with heavy losses. Budyonny captured rich trophies: 2 guns with 300 shells, 4 machine guns, 300 rifles. This was Semyon Mikhailovich's first success in the Civil War. According to her daughter Nina, her father "was never afraid to take responsibility, made decisions with lightning speed and was a very cunning person militarily." Together with him, his wife Nadezhda fought in the detachment, who was in charge of the supply and medical unit. On March 3, 1918, the "obscene" Treaty of Brest-Litovsk gave Ukraine to the Germans. With the approach of German troops on the Don, a powerful anti-Soviet uprising broke out. On May 8, 1918, the Cossacks and Germans drove the Reds out of Rostov-on-Don. Budyonny's detachment, conducting rearguard battles, retreated to Tsaritsyn. In June, the Soviet partisan detachments united into one detachment under the command of Grigory Shevkoplyasov. The entire cavalry of the detachment was headed by Dumenko, and Budyonny became his deputy. Boris Mokeevich Dumenko, a nonresident, like Budyonny, served in the First World War in a horse artillery regiment, rose to the rank of sergeant major, had a full bow - four soldier's "George". Maybe Semyon Mikhailovich came up with a legend about his own full bow in order to be no worse than Dumenko. Then, already in the Civil War, Dumenko promoted himself to the captain and walked in a uniform with gold shoulder straps until the partisans dema

himself for the captain, which was a pure lie, but made him even more suspicious in the eyes of the Bolshevik commissars, whom Boris Mokeevich, like the Jews, did not favor. For the time being, Dumenko and Budyonny served together and got along quite well with each other, and even later, when their paths diverged, they did not have sharp conflicts. As we will see below, Budyonny was not the initiator of the massacre of Dumenko and did not at all seek to "drown" him during the investigation, as some debunkers of perestroika times claimed. But after the death of Dumenko, Semyon Mikhailovich tried to appropriate all the glory of the organizer of the first detachments of the Soviet cavalry on the Don. He strongly opposed the rehabilitation of Dumenko, so as not to destroy his own myth and prevent the appearance of a rival in the historical memory of the people.

Near Tsaritsyn, Budyonny met Stalin for the first time. This happened at a meeting on the Dubovka farm on July 23, 1918, when Soviet troops were retreating to Tsaritsyn. In October 1918, the 1st Don Soviet Rifle Division was formed from partisan detachments, which was initially commanded by V.S. Kovalev, and from November 11 - by G.K. Shevkoplyasov. She became part of the 10th Army, formed on October 3, commanded by K. E. Voroshilov. The 1st Socialist Cavalry Regiment was formed in the division. They were commanded by B. M. Dumenko, whose assistant was Budyonny. The regiment successfully fought against the army of General Krasnov on the outskirts of Tsaritsyn. Soon he was deployed to a brigade, and then to the Combined Cavalry Division, where Budyonny became chief of staff. On January 10, 1919, when Dumenko fell ill with typhus, Budyonny led the Special Cavalry Division through enemy rear lines. The raid lasted 37 days. Budyonnovtsy defeated 23 Cossack regiments in the area of Dubovka, Davydovka and Karpovka, captured 48 guns, more than 100 machine guns, marched through enemy rear lines for more than 400 kilometers. The commander of the Tsaritsyn Front, A. I. Yegorov, wrote in an order: "The ring of the siege of Tsaritsyn was broken only thanks to the valiant actions of the glorious cavalry of Budyonny ... The result of her actions was the complete defeat of the enemy in front of the front of the northern sector and the center of the 10 Army ... Our army

successes of Budyonny's cavalry, rushed forward with high spirits, pursuing the retreating enemy to Manych. Krasnov's army was forced to retreat from Tsaritsyn, and the mass withdrawal of the Upper Don regiments from the front put it in a critical situation. Only thanks to the help of the Volunteer Army of A.I. Denikin did the Cossacks manage to hold the front. In battles, Budyonny was

wounded in the left leg and right arm, but remained in the ranks. In the order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic No. 26 dated March 29, 1919, the successful raid of the Special Cavalry Division was specially noted.

Budyonny, among other commanders, was awarded the Order of the Red Banner. Regarding the Tsaritsyn battles, Trotsky wrote in his dying book "Stalin", work on which was interrupted by the blow of the ice ax Ramon Mercader: "In order to nominate commanders closer to the Soviet regime from the bottom, a special mobilization of former tsarist non-commissioned officers was carried out. Most of them were promoted to non-commissioned officers in the last period of the war and had no serious military significance. But the old non-commissioned officers who knew the army well, especially the artillery and cavalry, were often much higher than the officers under whose command they were. Such people as Krylenko, Budyonny, Dybenko and many others belonged to this category. These elements were recruited in tsarist times from more literate, more cultured, more accustomed to command, and not passively obey, and naturally, if only the sons of large peasants, small landowners, the sons of the urban bourgeois, accountants, petty officials, etc. ., in most cases they were prosperous or wealthy peasants, especially in the cavalry. Non-commissioned officers of this kind willingly assumed command, but they were not inclined to obey, to endure the command of officers over themselves, and just as little gravitated towards the Communist Party, its discipline and its goals, especially in the field of the agrarian question. To procurement at fixed prices, as well as to the expropriation of grain from the peasants, such strong non-commissioned officers were treated with furious enmity. The cavalryman belonged to this kind

Dumenko, commander of the corps near Tsaritsyn and direct boss of Budyonny, who at that time commanded a brigade or division. Dumenko was more gifted than Budyonny, but he ended up in revolt, killed the communists in his corps, tried to go over to Denikin's side, was captured and shot. Budyonny and commanders close to him also knew the period of hesitation. One of the chiefs of the Tsaritsyn brigades, subordinate to Budyonny, rebelled, many of the cavalymen went into the green partisans.

The betrayal of Nosovich (a former colonel in the tsarist army, who served in the defense headquarters of Tsaritsyn and, after the conspiracy was exposed, defected to Krasnov. - **B.S.**), who occupied a purely bureaucratic administrative post, had, of course, less harm than the betrayal of Dumenko. But since the military opposition entirely relied on such elements as Dumenko at the front, his rebellion is now not mentioned at all. Of course, the top leadership of the army was responsible for both Nosovich and Dumenko, because in their construction they tried to combine, combine different types, testing them through each other. Mistakes in appointments and betrayals were everywhere. In Tsaritsyn, where the conditions were special: the abundance of cavalry, the Cossack encirclement, the army, created from partisan detachments, the specific nature of the leadership - all this created the conditions for a large number of betrayals here than anywhere else. It would be ridiculous now to blame Stalin or Voroshilov for this. But it is just as absurd to throw the responsibility for these episodes now, twenty years later, on the main command, on the leadership of the army. Of course, Lev Davydovich described the events of twenty years ago from memory, without having documents at hand, and confused a lot. It seems that he combined Dumenko and Mironov into one whole and attributed to this collective course of action, which none of the cavalry commanders shot by the Soviet authorities actually did. Mironov did not suit Trotsky as a collective hero, since he was not a non-commissioned officer, but an officer, a military foreman. The disgraced chairman of the Revolutionary M

his thesis about the special role of regular non-commissioned officers in the formation of the Red Army, from which both its strengths (proximity of commanders to the soldier mass) and weak ones (partisanism, unwillingness to obey specialist officers, lack of education) stemmed. In reality, Dumenko's involvement in the murders of the commissar and other political workers of his corps was never proven, and he did not withdraw his corps from the front; only rumors circulated about his intention to unite with Denikin, hardly fair. Mironov - he really arbitrarily sent his unformed corps to the front, but not in order to go to Denikin, but to fight against him. Here, I repeat, Trotsky either involuntarily made a mistake, or deliberately distorted the truth in order to retroactively justify the reprisal against Dumenko. But as for the generally positive assessment of Budyonny, Lev Davydovich clearly did not prevaricate, although Semyon Mikhailovich was in the camp of his enemies. However, Trotsky did not consider him a serious political opponent, fully aware of the political insignificance of Budyonny. However, Lev Davydovich did not consider Voroshilov to be any serious political figure, rightly believing that he was just an obedient executor of Stalin's will. For Budyonny, the former chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council recognized the ability to lead fighters - this is what meant the ability to command in the conditions of the Civil War. When he said that Dumenko was more gifted than Budyonny, he probably meant the eloquence of Boris Mokeevich, and by no means that he had any special strategic abilities. To the presence of such abilities in former non-commissioned officers, Trotsky in general

was skeptical.

Probably, Trotsky is also right in that the expropriation of peasant property did not cause delight in Budyonny. However, Semyon Mikhailovich knew his army well and felt to what extent it was possible to fight robberies. Of course, when excesses were overflowing and threatened to disintegrate the Cavalry, harsh and decisive measures were taken. We will make sure of this. However, an attempt to completely stop robberies

threatened that Budyonny would remain a commander without an army, and he understood this very well. As for the hesitations of Budyonny, which Trotsky wrote about, no objective evidence of their presence in the commander of the First Cavalry has ever been found. During the 1920s, the Bolsheviks more than once suspected Budyonny that at the first opportunity he might recoil from the Bolsheviks and join the peasant insurrectionary movements, or even lead them. Even his best friend Voroshilov suspected Semyon Mikhailovich. However, it seems that the fears about Semyon Mikhailovich were greatly exaggerated. Trotsky rightly noted that the betrayal of individual fighters and commanders of the Cavalry Army, who often went over to the Whites with entire regiments, can in no way be blamed either on Budyonny or Voroshilov. Moreover, most of the Cossacks in the changed regiments had previously served with the Whites and became part of the Cavalry

only after the capture of Novorossiysk. Budyonny was a man of his own mind, but certainly devoid of political ambitions. He was extremely vain, but did not aspire to power - perhaps because he did not have a penchant for administration. According to many testimonies, as a leader in peacetime, he was nothing, and in the Great Patriotic War he did not distinguish himself in anything outstanding. Budyonny lived according to the principle: they don't look for good from good. Since the Soviet government welcomes him, since he has powerful patrons and defenders in the person of Stalin and Voroshilov, who are always ready to cover the Cavalry from the wrath of the central organs, then there is absolutely no need to get into any dangerous adventures, pretending to be the new Makhno. Moreover, it was difficult for Semyon Mikhailovich to compete with the real Makhno - in terms of charisma, Nestor Ivanovich surpassed him by a whole head. After all, Makhno actually created his own army, subordinate to no one but him, and even his own mini-state in southern Ukraine (if, of course, the term "state" is applicable to an anarchist formation). The leader of the anarchists was a wonderful orator and knew how to

Budyonny, according to the recollections of all who knew him, was distinguished by a rare tongue-tied tongue. And in general, it is not very clear how he managed to keep tens of thousands of masterful fighters under his power. Obviously, he possessed some kind of inner charisma, and those who previously had much greater merit and were considered a much more dashing horseman unquestioningly obeyed him. For example, the same Tyulenev, ensign and full cavalier of St. George, served with Budyonny only as a brigade commander. But Semyon Mikhailovich felt that he would not be able to command all the armed forces, much less govern the state. True, he, like the vast majority of people, had a higher opinion of his abilities than those around him, and sincerely believed that he was born a real commander of the army, and even the front (although during the Great Patriotic War it turned out that he was clearly beyond his strength to command the front). However, even for the post of commander in chief or minister of war, Semyon Mikhailovich never threatened, he knew his hearth and understood that it was a disastrous thing for a military man to get into politics, especially in Soviet times. One of his rivals, Mironov, paid with his life for politics, because he seriously imagined himself as a third force on the Russian chessboard, capable of fighting both the Whites and the Bolsheviks. Budyonny never made such a mistake even in his thoughts. His vanity was fully satisfied with external honors, and the Soviet authorities rewarded them with a vengeance. Budyonny has become a symbolic figure. Propaganda for many years created his poster image, illustrating what opportunities the Soviet government creates for the people - a poor peasant who sincerely accepted the ideas of communism became one of the first Soviet marshals and outstanding commanders. True, Budyonny was the son of a not entirely poor peasant, and it seems that he never believed in the ideals of communism, but, of course, he did not advertise this disbelief. And the appearance for posters and photographs was very suitable - a handsome, brave cavalryman. One mustache was worth it! But Semyon Mikhailovich could not go over to the Whites, even if he sud

was of no interest to either Krasnov or Denikin. Faster than the local newspapers would have shouted for a week, that, behold, the famous Budyonny renounced the Bolsheviks. With the army, he could not cross in any way. After all, the backbone of the Cavalry was made up of non-residents who had nothing to do with the whites, where the basis of the cavalry was their primordial enemies - the Cossacks. Naturally, no one would have allowed Budyonny to command the Cossacks. And for the non-Cossack cavalry, Denikin had an abundance of officers who, for lack of vacancies, served as privates, so nothing shone for Semyon Mikhailovich here either. The suspicions of Trotsky, Voroshilov and other commissars about Budyonny had, as we see, no real basis. At the same time, the merits of Budyonny were willingly recognized by the White Guards themselves. Here is what the white Cossack memoirist General A.V. Golubintsev writes, for example, about the Tsaritsyn battles: "Turning around, our units launched an offensive, trying to envelop the village from the flank and cut off the retreat to Dubovka. After a brief skirmish, the enemy, hiding behind artillery, withdrew to the Dubovka settlement. From a survey of the prisoners captured in Davydovka and the story of the priest, in whose house the headquarters of the red cavalry was located, we learned that the village was occupied by the Dumenko cavalry division, it was temporarily commanded due to the wound in the hand in the battle on December 30 of the head of the division, his assistant - Semyon Budyonny. A small detail: the priest noticed that "comrade" Budyonny, receiving reports, examined them for a long time and diligently, then, passing them on to the chief of staff or adjutant, he said: "You can't make out anything, it's so incomprehensible, sons of bitches, they write!" still hard to believe. Of course, Budyonny was neither Shakespeare nor Leo Tolstoy, but he certainly knew the letter, and quite well, otherwise no one would have left him for extra urgent, would not have appointed him a platoon non-commissioned officer and acting sergeant major. Nevertheless, the same Golubintsev admits that Budyonny famously beat the whites: "According to the report of the commander of the 16th cavalry regiment, Colonel Dyakonov, the units that occupied Pryamaya Balka, having received an order to advance on Dubovka, began to line up and leave the village, waiting for the

reconnaissance, and the right flank, hoping for units that were, according to General Tatarkin, in Tishanka, was guarded only by outposts. At this time, quite unexpectedly, from the side of Tishanka, Budyonny's cavalry detachment with two armored vehicles collapsed on our right flank. The sudden appearance of armored cars with machine guns caused a panic in the 16th Cavalry Regiment. The regiment rushed into the neighboring beam, which stretched to the left, parallel to our movement. The 5th Foot Regiment courageously accepted the attack, meeting the Reds with rifle and machine-gun fire. The overwhelming number of the enemy, the surprise and, mainly, thanks to the machines that had never been seen before, which seemed invulnerable, forced the regiment, which had lost half of its people, to also retreat along the beam in groups to Davydovka. The appearance of enemy vehicles made a strong impression on all our units. Nervousness rose as a result of unpreparedness to fight armored cars and seeming helplessness to stop their swiftness. The ghost of armored vehicles hovered over the units for several more days, and sometimes the appearance of a kitchen on the

horizon caused alarming cries: "Armored car!" "Thus, Budyonny achieved victory, one of the first in the Civil War using armored vehicles to jointly attack enemy infantry positions with cavalry. A special cavalry division for this feat was awarded an honorary revolutionary weapon, and Budyonny was one of the first in the republic to receive the Order of the Red Banner. And on April 26, 1919, Semyon Mikhailovich became the commander of the 1st Red Cavalry Corps, while remaining at the same time the head of the 4th Cavalry Division, which was renamed the Special Don Cavalry Division. On May 25, Dumenko was seriously wounded in the chest in a battle near the Sal River. Together with Dumenko, his chief, Commander-10 Egorov, was also wounded. But the wound of the future marshal of the USSR turned out to be harmless, and the divisional doctors considered Dumenko hopeless. If Boris Mokeevich had died then, he would have turned into a legendary hero of the Civil War, like Shchors or Chapaev. Then, already in the 20s and 30s, books would have been writt

cities and collective farms, ships and pioneer detachments. And Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny in this case would certainly have found in his memoirs a few kind words about the deceased commander, about their short but strong friendship, hardened in battles, and that Dumenko was a faithful son of the party and the people. But Boris Mokeevich was taken to the then luminary of medicine - the Saratov doctor S.I. Spasokukotsky, the largest specialist in gastrointestinal and pulmonary surgery. And Sergei Ivanovich saved him. As a result, Dumenko was awaited by execution by an unfair sentence and belated rehabilitation in the 60s, fierce criticism in Budyonny's articles and memoirs. The first division commander of the Special Cavalry Division remained on the periphery of the history of the Civil War. His place was taken by Budyonny and Voroshilov. On September 14, 1919, the Budyonny Cavalry Corps disarmed the Special Cossack Corps of F.K. Order of the RVS of the Republic dated September 12, 1919 No. 150 read: "Former Cossack Colonel Mironov at one time fought in the Red troops against Krasnov. Mironov was guided by his personal career, striving to become the Don ataman. When it became clear to Colonel Mironov that the Red Army was fighting not for his, Mironov's, ambition, but for the sake of the peasant poor, Mironov raised the banner of insurrection. Having entered into relations with Mamontov and Denikin, Mironov confused several hundred Cossacks and is trying to get into the ranks of the division with them in order to bring confusion there and transfer the workers' and peasants' regiments into the hands of revolutionary enemies. As a traitor and traitor, Mironov is outlawed. Every honest citizen who gets in the way of Mironov is obliged to shoot him like a mad dog. Death to a traitor! .. Chairman of the RVSR

Trotsky. It is interesting that earlier Mironov's fighters themselves sometimes participated in decossackization, although their commander opposed the policy of the Communist Party in this matter. So, in the Bolshoi farm of the Ust-Khoperskaya stanitsa, the Cossacks of the 1st Don Revolutionary Regiment of the 23rd Divis

dragging by the beards, 20 old men "for malicious agitation" (they tried to "conscience them and set them on the right path"). In the village of Nizhnechirskaya, the Red Cossacks set up shops and distributed property to the population, along the way

arranging lynching of the "local counter". The chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council knew that Mironov was not going to unite with any Denikin: he would immediately hang him. Yes, and the Mironov Cossacks did not burn with a special desire to go over to the whites. But in order to turn other Red Army soldiers against Mironov, including Budyonny's fighters, Trotsky deliberately distorted the facts and accused Mironov of treason.

Thus, Budyonny was sure that Mironov was planning to defect to the Whites. In fact, Filipp Kuzmich was going to fight Denikin, but without the commissars, in whom he saw the oppressors and exterminators of the Cossacks. Some of Mironov's Cossacks were included in Budyonny's corps. This happened near the village of Satarovsky, the village of Staro-Annenskaya. Semyon Mikhailovich wrote in his memoirs: "I wanted to go to Mironov to

arrest him, but Gorodovikov

jumped up to Mironov, took him under escort and brought him to me. Mironov was terribly indignant. - What kind of arbitrariness is this, Comrade Budyonny? he shouted. - Some kind of Kalmyk, like a bandit, grabs me, the commander of the red corps, pulls me to you and does not even want to talk. I formed my corps in order to hold a rally together with your corps and call on the fighters to make efforts to save democracy. What kind of democracy are you going to save?

bourgeois! No, mister Mironov, late, too late!.. You are disarmed as a traitor outlawed. - That's what

you are, illegal live, and still swear! Gorodovikov shook his head reproachfully. Immediately after the arrest, a meeting of the commanding and political staff of Budyonny's corps approved an order according to which Mironov, outlawed, was to be shot, and other commanders of the rebellious corps were to be tried.

But Mironov was saved by Trotsky, who unexpectedly arrived at the location of th

plans. During the offensive of Denikin, the Bolsheviks needed to attract at least part of the Cossacks to their side. And Mironov was popular among the Cossacks. Therefore, after a show trial, in which Filipp Kuzmich and his comrades were sentenced to death, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee pardoned them. Trotsky was the initiator of the pardon, as can be seen from his two telegrams addressed to a member of the Military Council of the Southern Front: "By a direct wire. Cipher. Balashov. Smilga. The report on the Mironov trial suggests that the case is heading towards a lenient sentence. In view of Mironov's behavior, I believe that such a decision was, perhaps, expedient. The slowness of our offensive on the Don requires increased political influence on the Cossacks in order to split it. For this mission, perhaps, to take advantage of Mironov, calling him to Moscow after being sentenced to death and pardoning him through the All-Russian Central Executive Committee - with his obligation to go to the rear and raise an uprising there. Let me know your thoughts on this. October 7, 1919. No. 408. Pre-revolutionary military council Trotsky. The second telegram said: "I put the question of changing the policy towards the Don Cossacks for discussion in the Politburo of the Central Committee. We give the Don, the Kuban full "autonomy", our troops clear the Don. The Cossacks are completely breaking with Denikin. Appropriate guarantees must be created. Mironov and his comrades could act as intermediaries, who would have to go deep into the Don. Send your written considerations at the same time that Mironov and others are sent here. For the sake of caution, Mironov should not be released immediately, but sent under gentle but vigilant control to Moscow. Here the question of his fate can be resolved. October 10, 1919. No. 408. Pre-revolutionary military council Trotsky. Mironov was introduced to the Don Council of People's Commissars, then commanded the 2nd Cavalry Army in battles in Northern Tavia and during the capture of Crimea. We will talk about him and his rivalry with Budyonny in the battles against Wrangel. In the meantime, we will only point out that the chairman of the cultural enlightenment of the Makhn

Crimea side by side with Povstarmy. Since 1919, the commander's brother was in the Makhnovshchina chief of staff of the 2nd Azov Corps. And, according to Belash (chief of staff of the Makhnovist rebel army. - **B.S.**), the 2nd Cavalry was ready to rise at the first signal. Of course, in his memoirs, one of the ideologists of the Makhnovist movement could add something about the negotiations between Mironov and Makhno. But the ideological affinity of these two figures, of course, was. Mironov, like Makhno, wanted to be a peasant leader and disliked communists and surplus appropriations, although he never openly declared his commitment to anarchism. By the way, it was Nestor Makhno's 5,000-strong expeditionary corps under the leadership of Semyon Karetnikov who delivered the main blow to the Wrangel cavalry corps of General Barbovich and was the first to force the Sivash. By the way, the 2nd Cavalry only slightly outnumbered the Makhnovists in numbers, numbering only 6,000 people and far inferior in this respect to the 1st Cavalry. In 1921,

Mironov was again arrested and shot by order of Dzerzhinsky. There is no doubt that the question of the fate of Filipp Kuzmich was decided by the Politburo, but the corresponding protocol has not yet been made public. From the Butyrka prison, Mironov wrote a long letter to the head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, M. I. Kalinin, hoping for indulgence. Here are his

favorite places: "Dear comrades and citizens! A letter (No. 61, Pravda) to the Central Control Commission states:

"The Party recognizes itself as a single, cohesive army, an advanced detachment of working people, directing the struggle and directing it in such a way that those who are lagging behind can approach, and those who run ahead do not break away from those broad masses who must put into practice the tasks of new construction ... "For 4 years of revolutionary struggle, I did not break away from the broad masses, but whether I fell behind or ran ahead, I don't know myself, but sitting in Butyrka prison with a sick heart, I feel that I am sitting and suffering for this slogan

The one who, at the cost of life and the remnants of nerves, wrested the victory from the hands of Baron Wrangel on October 13–14, 1920 near the village of Sholokhov from the hands of Baron Wrangel, but whom the “dolyushka” saved in order to torment in Butyrka prison, the one who knocked down Wrangel’s support in a mortal fight - General Babiev, and from whose skillful actions the division chief of Markovskaya, General Count Tretyakov, shot himself. The one who, in your presence on October 25, 1920, on the right bank of the Dnieper near the village of Verkhne-Tarnovskoye, called on the red soldiers of the 16th Cavalry Division to take the monastery that was white across the wide river on the same night, and to hoist the Red Banner of Labor over Sevastopol by Christmas, is addressing you. You survived these moments of high upsurge with the 2nd Cavalry Army, and how she and her army commander

fulfilled their revolutionary duty is eloquently evidenced by the order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic dated December 4, 1920 No. 7078. The one who snatched the initiative of victory from the hands Wrangel on October 13-14, who these days tore out the black banner of General Shkuro with the image of a wolf's head (the emblem of a predatory capitalist) with the inscription "For a united and indivisible Russia" and handed it over to you as a pledge of fidelity to the social revolution between political leaders and with its leaders Red Army. It is the tired and tormented who turn to you for

social justice, and if you, Mikhail Ivanovich, remain deaf until April 15, 1921, I will end my life in prison by starvation. If I felt even a little guilty, I would consider it a disgrace to live and handle this letter. I'm too proud to deal with my conscience. All my long-suffering life and 18 years of revolutionary struggle speak of an indefatigable thirst for justice, deep love for the working people, my disinterestedness and the honesty of those means of struggle that I resorted to in order to help the people.

I was charged with a monstrous charge of "organizing an uprising on the Don against Soviet power." The reason for such absurdity was the fact that the bandit Vakulin, who raised an uprising in the Ust Medveditsky district, referred in his appeals

me as popular on the Don, that I will support him with the 2nd Cavalry Army. He equally referred to the support of Comrade Budyonny. Vakulin raised an uprising on December 18, 1920, and at that time I was smashing Makhno's gangs in Ukraine, and I became aware of his uprising from operational reports. In addition to the uprising in the aforementioned district, those broke out almost simultaneously in other districts, under the influence, as can be judged, of the Antonov uprising in the Voronezh province. Vakulin's reference to Antonov's support was natural, but the reference to me and Comrade Budyonny is a provocative lie I don't want to allow the thought that the Soviet government, on a vile unfounded denunciation, guillotined one of its best fighters - "the valiant commander of the 2nd Cavalry Army", as stated in the order of the PBC of the Republic of December 4, 1920, No. 7078. I do not want to believe that vile slander was stronger than the evidence of my political and military merits before the social revolution and the Soviet government, my honesty and sincerity before it. I do not want to believe that vile slander will overshadow the bright image of the Order of the Red Banner, this symbol of the world proletarian revolution, which I wear with undisguised pride. I do not want to believe that under the poisonous breath of slander the blade of the golden honorary weapon will grow dull and that the minute hand of the golden watch will stop its course when the hand of a traitor squeezes my throat under his satanic laughter. I do not want to believe that the old revolutionary, who took the platform of Soviet power from the first minute of its inception - October 25, 1917 - that the old revolutionary from the tsarist officers, persecuted for "redness", helped General Kaledin leave the workers alone, who beat Krasnov, Denikin and Wrangel, was languishing in prison to the delight of enemies. I want to believe that I will again lead the red regiments to victory in Bucharest, Budapest, etc., as I said, on the ill-fated

February 8, the ill-fated "five" for me, in which there were provocateurs. Where did I draw such hope from? First of all, in his innocence before the Soviet government. Then what made

recognized by you and the Tenth Party Congress: "Without a solid alliance of workers and peasants, victory is impossible. That these main forces on which the revolution rests are disintegrating, and our task is to rally and unite them again so that everyone understands that fatigue threatens not only the Communist Party, but the entire working population of the republic. (Gaz. "Pravda" No. 63.) I stood up for the independence of the working masses - see the testimony to the investigator dated February 26, and on March 22 an article appeared in the newspaper Pravda No. 61, which says "that the farmer's initiative is needed." Did I fall behind or ran and then - Don't know.

All of the above, in connection with "a new turn in the economic policy of the Soviet government" (Pravda No. 62), in connection with "the course taken for a decisive rapprochement with the masses" (Pravda No. 58), gives me faith that the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, according to your report, will hasten my release, because I do not admit any

guilt to myself. The prison regime has a detrimental effect on my weak health, shattered by many years of heavy struggle. I'm slowly wasting away. What helped me to do during the month, from September 5 to October 5, 1920, the 2nd Cavalry Army not only combat-ready, but also invincible, despite its two-time defeat before this, despite the motley replenishment hastily thrown by the republic from all over? Only the sincere voice of the soul, with which I called to smash Wrangel. Only such a voice can captivate

the masses. You will find an echo of it in my memoirs "How the Defeat of Wrangel Began," which was taken from me during my arrest. "To the masses" is the main slogan of the

Tenth Congress. And if this slogan is illustrated by a decree (Izvestiya newspaper No. 67) on permitting the free exchange, sale and purchase of grain and grain fodder products, then it would seem that the time has just come for the Soviet government through me as a party member and for the party to turn into life in all its might is an abandoned slogan and resolutely draw closer to the masses - and instead they threw me in prison. This new decree brought my memories back and

compels me to share with you a very characteristic phenomenon of our turbulent times. Among the papers and documents confiscated from me during my arrest, there are a number of statements about how the population of the Ust-Medveditsky district, driven by hunger, was forced to go to the neighboring Verkhne Donskoy district, where even in remote villages and farms there were stocks of bread in order to exchange for the last shirt a piece of bread for bloated children, and how it was shamelessly robbed there. The receptions of the local authorities were simple. If they needed things, then, not allowing an exchange, they took them away; if bread was needed, then they, having given the opportunity to make an exchange, released the appointed victim on the way, and then, having caught up, they took away the bread. The

suffering and tears of hungry, robbed people forced me to raise this issue at the district party conference in Mikhailovka on February 12, 1921, and to cover it comprehensively in order to take some measures both against the impending famine and against the arbitrariness inflicted on hungry people, as well as in for the purpose of acquiring seed material for the spring, so as not to repeat the autumn experience, when, due to the lack of seeds, the fields remained unsown. My proposal aroused heated arguments among short-sighted

politicians who were not slow to accuse me of a tendency towards free trade, that is, almost a counter-revolution, which forced me to protest against the biased presentation of my thought. I think that this was recorded in the protocol for the next denunciation of seditious

my thoughts.

Whether I lagged behind here or ran ahead, life showed us that on March 23, 1921, the central government, by its decree on free exchange, sale and purchase, took the same point of view as I did. And for this clairvoyance they are going to judge me. The Soviet government replaced the front of coercion with the front of persuasion, on which I was so strong (the defeat of Kaledin, Krasnov, Wrangel), but I am not yet destined to stand among the fighters of this life front ...

... Once again I want to believe that, having freed me from slander and heavy undeserved suspicion, having restored my trust again, as before the defeat of Wrangel, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee will still find in me one of the staunchest fighters for Soviet power. After all, this test for the communists is not far off. In his speech, Comrade Lenin said: "It turned out, as it turns out constantly in the entire history of the revolution, that the movement went in

zigzags ..." (Pravda, No. 57). The sharp corners of these zigzags in 1918-1919 painfully cut my soul for the dark, ignorant, but native Don Cossacks, cruelly deceived by the generals and landowners, abandoned by the revolutionary forces, who paid tens of thousands of lives and complete ruin for their political backwardness, and in 1920 - In 1921, these corners began to be cut even more painfully for the fate of the social revolution in the face of terrible

economic ruin. And now, when these sharp corners are recognized by everyone, when the leaders themselves openly admitted that if I were really to blame, my excuse is that we have gone further "than theoretically and politically necessary", when said so that the laggards have time to come up, and those who ran ahead did not break away from the broad masses; when it is said that "we must help tired and tormented people everywhere and everywhere", is it possible that slander will triumph over those who sincerely and honestly, maybe stumbled and made mistakes, lagging behind and running ahead, but went all the way to the same goal, one for the

communists - to strengthen the social revolution. Is it possible that the bright page of the Crimean struggle, which the 2nd Cavalry Army inscribed in the history of the revolution, should be overshadowed by a few words: "The commander of the 2nd Cavalry

Mironov died of starvation in Butyrka prison, slandered by a provocation." May this shameful page be gone, to the joy of the generals Krasnov

and Wrangel, who were beaten by me, and the chairman of the Military Circle, Kharla

I remain with a deep faith in the truth - the former commander of the 2nd Cavalry Army, communist F. K.

Mironov. The Soviet government only in one way met Mironov's requests: they did not let him die in prison due to a hunger strike, but, without waiting for April 15, they shot him already on the 2nd. Most likely, the Politburo decided that it was not advisable to try the previously convicted but pardoned Mironov a second time - there would be no propaganda effect. On the contrary, an open trial will cause discontent among those Cossacks who fought alongside Mironov. It would also be bad if he died in prison as a result of a hunger strike - revolutionaries were supposed to die from hunger strikes in tsarist prisons, not in Soviet prisons. Therefore, they preferred to quietly shoot Mironov, without informing the public about it. The accusation was formulated retroactively, after Mironov was shot in prison by sentries by order of the Presidium of the Cheka on April 2, 1921. The text of this decree is so secret that it has not been found so far. It can be assumed that it is stored in the Presidential Archive (the former archive of the Politburo of the Central Committee), since all the long-term searches in the archives of the FSB have not been successful. In addition, I repeat that this decision of the Presidium of the Cheka was probably preceded by the decision of the Politburo, which, most likely, is stored in the same presidential archive inaccessible to mere mortals. During the years of the Civil War, they were often shot first, and then retroactively issued an indictment. Here is this amazing document - a posthumous indictment against F. K. Mironov, and the investigator who compiled it sincerely believed that the person under investigation was still alive: "Conclusion. 1921, August 13 days, I, an employee on behalf of 16 special. Department of OOVChK Kopylov, considered the present case on charges of organizing counter-revolutionary cells with the aim of overthrowing the former Communist Party. commander of the 2nd Cavalry Corps

The second con-building. - **B.S.)** Mironov Philip Kozmich, 48 years old, coming from the Cossacks of the village of Ust-Medveditskaya.

At the investigation carried out on this occasion, it turned out that he was sent to the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief of All the Armed Forces of the Republic on the basis of an order on the troops of the Caucasus Front dated 20.1. With. No. 160 § 1 and telegrams of the Vice-Chairman Rev. of the Council of the Republic of 4.XII - p.g. No. 7078 and having a 10-day vacation from Rev. Military Council of the Caucasian Front ex. On February 6, the commander of the 2nd Corps, Mironov, drove to the village of U.-Medveditskaya through the settlement of Mikhailovka, did not appear either at the People's Commissar, or at the Revolutionary Committee, or at the headquarters of the commander of the U.-Medveditsky Military District, but stopped to spend the night at the fist of the village of Archadinskaya, punishing Board of horses the next morning for further movement. On the morning of 7.11, appearing at the Archadinsky Executive Committee, Mironov, in the presence of citizens, beat up the pre-executive committee of comrade. Baryshnikov for not preparing the horses for the requested time, beating comrade. Baryshnikov Mironov was accompanied by the words: "It is not surprising that such old revolutionaries as Vakulin rebel against such bastards from the Communist Party, where shoemakers do not do business, but run the state." 2. On 8.11 in the evening, at Mironov's apartment, after a rally in the village of U.-Medveditskaya, at which Mironov spoke, praising the gangster Vakulin, a meeting was held at which Mironov touched on the form of government of the RSFSR and emphasized that at present the state is ruled not by the people, but by a small a handful of people: Lenin, Trotsky and others who uncontrollably dispose of the property and honor of the people. Along the way, Mironov drew the attention of the meeting participants to the foreign origin of the party leaders and prompted them to think that such a situation was unstable and abnormal. For greater weight and authority of his opinion, Mironov referred to a conversation with the chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, Kalinin, who allegedly was also not sure of the strength of the existing system. Referring to the international position of the Soviet Republic, Mironov emphasized the fact that the blockade of the Republic had not been broken, the

the proletariat, and the Entente did not renounce intervention, and in the spring Wrangel, at the head of an army of 60,000, with the support of foreigners, would launch a campaign against Soviet power. Developing his thought further, Mironov pointed out that Lenin and Trotsky, disillusioned with the revolutionary nature of the Western European proletariat, are directing their agitation to the East, with the aim of igniting it with the fire of revolution. Mironov dwelled on the policy of the Soviet government in the Cossack regions, striving to put the Cossacks from the position of masters and masters of the lands inhabited by them into a position of bondage. Such a policy of the Soviet government as a whole, according to Mironov, will lead the Republic to collapse, which will occur in the spring or autumn of this year. Having prepared an anti-Soviet mood in the minds of the participants in the meeting, Mironov proposed organizing cells and recommended at first not to leave the Soviets, but to work in them. The task of these cells is to fight the communists and to develop among the masses the idea of the need for a constituent assembly. For technical communication and secrecy, Mironov familiarized the participants of the meeting with the cipher, and distributed to each a cast of a wax seal and a diagram of the organization of counter-revolutionary cells. At the meeting, Mironov reported on the anti-Soviet sentiments of the Kuban Cossacks, whose delegation complained to him about their fate, to which Mironov replied that if they rebelled, he would pacify them. Mironov immediately explained that the Kuban understood him not in the literal sense of the word, but allegorically, since he would never suppress them. At the end of the meeting, Mironov recommended that everyone

keep a secret and not talk about this to their neighbors. 3. To a telephone message from a member of the Donispolkom, chairman of the Troika for the Restoration of Soviet Power in the U.-Medveditsky District with the message that Vakulin's gangs are abusing Mironov's name, he definitely claims that in their actions against Soviet power they will meet with the support of him, Mironov, and that those demobilized from 2 The 1st Cavalry stubbornly insist that a purge will begin with the arrival of Mironov, and therefore asked to write an appeal to the population refuting this slander associated with his name, and i

similar rumors and at rallies to pursue this line. Mironov replied that he was indifferent to this kind of rumors, because his name was rattling around everywhere. 4. On

February 10, Mironov appeared at a party conference in the village. Mikhailovka, to the question of a member of the Donispolkom present at the conference, who instructed Mironov on behalf of the Regional Party Committee to issue an appeal to the population refuting the vile slander in connection with his name, whether he had fulfilled this instruction, Mironov replied evasively: "My head hurts." In greeting the 2nd Cavalry, Mironov at the conference emphasized his personal merits and expressed this: "We have fulfilled our duty, but the communists have dug in on the ground and are not doing anything, and it is necessary to purge the party." Twice Mironov tried to disrupt the conference, but to no avail. In the sowing campaign, Mironov came up with a proposal to allow the purchase of seeds on the free market in neighboring provinces. Concerning the state appropriation, Mironov was indignant at the fact that bread was being taken away from the peasants by force of arms. According to Mironov, the Communists must honestly admit that they will not lead the

country out of the current situation, and therefore must step back from power. On the report of economic construction, Mironov in his speech stated that it was necessary to declare a free trade in grain. Referring to Vakulin at the conference, Mironov did not consider it necessary to stigmatize him as a traitor, but, on the contrary, called him an honest revolutionary and communist, forced to revolt thanks to the unprincipled communists and the unreliability of the Soviet apparatus. It is characteristic that at the conference Mironov called all those who objected to him and dissidents gentlemen, Mironov opposed himself, who enjoys the trust of the population, to the Communist

Party and the bodies of Soviet power, to which the population is hostile. On February 11, parts of the convoy began to arrive at the Archada station. The exiled intelligence found that the Red Army was definitely waiting for Mironov, who was supposed to purge their rear and the communists who had clung to him and, in general, establish a new order. The situation was becoming serious - the

It is reliably confirmed that Mironov had a secret connection with dark and suspicious elements. Based on the foregoing and taking into account that the organization of adventurers with the aim of overthrowing the Communist Party is not Mironov's first adventure, I would think about the application of capital punishment to the accused Mironov ... As for the arrested Mironova N.V., the wife of the accused Mironov, in the absence of prosecution evidence I would have thought of the need to isolate within the limits of the Arkhangelsk province, in view of the possibility of malicious agitation on the part of it, which could have a detrimental effect on the Cossacks of the Don region, among whom the name of Mironov is popular. Reference: Mironov F. K. is kept in the internal prison of the Cheka. Errand Officer 16 Spec. otd. V. Kopylov. 13.8.21. And then the resolution: "Comrade. Kopylov. 1) Mironov was shot. 23.8.21. The fact that even the investigator did not know that Mironov had been executed a few months ago speaks of the extreme secrecy of his

executions.

It must be admitted that Mironov was doomed under the Bolsheviks. He, like Dumenko, dreamed of bringing a peasant utopia to life: no Cadets, no Bolsheviks, but people's power, that is, peasant power. True, the main peasant party, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, to whose views both Dumenko and Mironov were close, in the months that had passed from the moment of the February to the October Revolution, showed their complete inability to govern. The same thing happened with the left wing of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, which took shape in a separate party and remained in power for another eight months in a bloc with the Bolsheviks - a utopia always remains a utopia. Mironov had no chance of defeating the Bolsheviks, and the fact that he loved them no more than the Whites, despite his membership in the RCP (b), was well known in the Kremlin from numerous informers in Mironov's entourage. While victory in the Civil War remained in doubt, Dumenko and Mironov were needed, even needed. When the main White forces were defeated, Dumenko was executed. By that time, the Cossacks were already in full swing in the Red Army and

Budyonny's rival from out of town was no longer needed. Mironov was kept at liberty a little longer - he was still needed to agitate those Don Cossacks who remained with Wrangel. But after the defeat of Wrangel, Mironov became dangerous for the Soviet government. The Antonov uprising was blazing in the Tambov region, Kronstadt was in revolt. Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin, other leaders were afraid that Mironov would become the new Antonov and raise the Cossacks against the Soviets. Therefore, it was calmer to shoot him - even if without any fault, with clearly trumped-up charges. Unlike the naive Filipp Kuzmich, Budyonny was a much greater political realist, he didn't get into politics directly, he was cautious in conversations, he didn't quarrel with Voroshilov and lived in perfect harmony - although he probably guessed that his friend Klim was scribbling denunciations on him. And later, after rehabilitation, Mironov was watered in the press as best he could, portraying an adventurer who clung to the revolution. Mironov's scrupulous biographer E.F. Losev notes: "In the Don magazine No. 8, 1969, it is printed: "One journalist claimed that Mironov allegedly carried out revolutionary work back in 1906, took the revolutionary mandate of the villages and Cossack units to the State Duma and for this he was put in jail. By the February Revolution, having been awarded ten royal orders, he allegedly joined the "platform" of the Bolsheviks, and then opposed Kaledin. But all this "revolutionary" Mironov is not confirmed by any document. There is no evidence either of a trip to Petersburg with a revolutionary order, or that he was in prison. It is bitter and painful to realize that these words belong to ... S. M. Budyonny. And not only these. Budyonny inked the entire posthumous memory of Mironov. Why did he do it? What did he lack for a decent life? Authorities? Glory? Honor? Money? He seemed to have more than enough. What tormented and gnawed the commander of the civil war? Jealousy-envy even for a dead hero? Hasn't he spiritually risen above Wahmister thinking? Budyonny's guilt is immeasurable, because

what they have written is a lie."

In fact, Mironov was a genuine people's intercessor long before 1917. For the fact that he took to St. Petersburg an order from his countrymen who protested against the use of the Cossacks as punishers, Mironov was expelled from the army after the Russo-Japanese War. Budyonny did not have any revolutionary merit until 1917. So he was jealous of Mironov in his old age and tried to deprive Philip Kuzmich of the true facts of his biography. On the day that Budyonny was disarming Mironov's corps, Dumenko took command of the 2nd Cavalry Corps. Before that, in August, Dumenko met with Ivar Smilga, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front. Smilga subsequently recalled: "In a conversation with me, he most of all dwelled on the military episodes of recent battles. He was unable to keep up a conversation on political and strategic topics. Budyonny's successes, which began at that time, brought him into undisguised irritation. Knowing from the stories about his military abilities, I attributed most of my first extremely unfavorable impressions of Dumenka to the state of his health, which has not yet been restored. According to Smilga's story, in 1919, it was not Budyonny who envied Dumenko's former glory, but, on the contrary, Dumenko was having a hard time with Budyonny's then glory. Ivar Denisovich in this case is an impartial witness, for him both peasant commanders, Dumenko and Budyonny, are deeply alien and suspicious, especially since the latter is supported by Stalin, and Smilga is Trotsky's man. Trotsky himself described the events that preceded the decisive battles on the Denikin front, in which Budyonny and his army played the main role: "The offensive on the Southern Front, according to the plan of the commander in chief, began in mid-August. A month and a half later, at the end of September, I wrote to the Politburo: "A direct offensive along the line of greatest resistance turned out, as predicted, entirely into Denikin's hands ... As a result of a month and a half of fighting ... our situation on the Southern Front is now worse than it was at that moment when t

a priori plan. It would be childish to turn a blind eye to this." The words "as predicted" speak clearly of the friction that preceded the adoption of the strategic plan and

took place in June and early July.

So, the error of the plan was so certain for me that when it was approved by the Politburo - by all votes, including the voice of Stalin against me - I resigned. The decision of the Politburo regarding the resignation read: "Secret Copy from the copy

Moscow

July 5, 1919

RUSSIAN COMMUNIST

PARTY (Bolsheviks) CENTRAL COMMITTEE The Kremlin

Org. and Polit.

Bureau of the Central Committee,

having

examined the statement of Comrade Trotsky and thoroughly discussed this statement, came to the unanimous conclusion, They are absolutely incapable of accepting Comrade Trotsky's resignation and satisfying his petition. The Organizing and

Political Bureau of the Central Committee will do everything in their power to make that work on the southern front, the most difficult Trotsky, the most dangerous and most important at the present time, was chosen by Comrade Trotsky himself. In his ranks of the People's Commissariat of War and the Pre-revolutionary Military Council, Comrade Trotsky may well act as a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front with that Komfront (Yegoriev), whom he himself outlined,

and the Central Committee approved. The Organizing and Political Bureaus of the Central Committee give Comrade Trotsky every opportunity to achieve what he considers a correction of the line on the military question and, if he wishes,

to try to hasten the Party Congress. Firmly convinced that the resignation of Comrade Trotsky is absolutely impossible at the present moment and would be the greatest harm to the Republic, Org. and Polit.

Bureau of the Central Committee strongly suggest comrade. Trotsky should no longer raise this issue and continue to fulfill his functions, to

the maximum, if he wishes, reducing them in view of the concentration of his work on the

Org. and Polit. The Bureau of the Central Committee also rejects the withdrawal of Comrade Trotsky from the Politburo and his leaving the post of Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic (Narkomvoen).
Genuine

signed: Lenin, Kamenev, Krestinsky, Kalinin, Serebryakov, Stalin, Stasova. Truly true: Secretary of the Central Committee Elena Stasova. "I resigned and immediately went to the Southern Front, where the offensive that opened in mid-August soon stopped without yielding results. The fatal fallacy of the plan became clear to many workers, including Lashevich, who went over from On September 6, I telegraphed from the front to the Commander-in-Chief and the Central Committee that "the center of gravity of the struggle on the southern front has completely shifted to the Kursk-Voronezh sector, where there are no reserves," the telegram was signed by Serebryakov and Lashevich. But the commander-in-chief persisted, and the Politburo strongly supported him. On the same day, September 6, I received an answer. In two months, the course of military operations not only overturned the original plan, but also clearly indicated the main line of operations. However, behind two months of continuous and inconclusive fighting, many roads were destroyed, and the concentration of the reserve presented immeasurably greater difficulties than in June-July. A radical regrouping of forces was, however, a necessity. I proposed to transport Budyonny's cavalry corps in marching order and move a number of other units in a northeasterly direction. In the meantime, the offensive that had begun was suspended, the situation in the Kuban, where the best troops were bogged down, continued to be extremely difficult, Denikin was advancing to the North. "To test the operational plan," I wrote at the end of September, "it is useful to look at its results. The southern front received such forces as none of the fronts had ever had: by the time of the offensive, there were at least 180,000 bayonets and sabers on the southern front, a corres

As a result of one and a half months of fighting, we have miserable marking time in the eastern half of the Southern Front and a heavy retreat, the death of units, a disorder of the body - in the western half. The reason for the failure must be sought entirely in the operational plan. We went along the line of greatest resistance, i.e., we sent units of medium stability to the area inhabited entirely by the Cossacks, who do not attack, but defend their villages and centers. The atmosphere of the "people's" Don war has a relaxing effect on our units. Under these conditions, Denikin's tanks, skillful maneuvering, etc., turn out to be a colossal advantage in his hands. However, now it was no longer a matter of the plan, but of its consequences, material and psychological. The commander-in-chief hoped, apparently in accordance with Napoleon's rule, by persisting in the mistake, to extract all possible benefits from it and achieve victory in the end. The Politburo, losing confidence, persisted in its own decision. On September 21, our troops left Kursk. On October 13, Denikin took Orel, opening his way to Tula, where the most important military factories were concentrated, and Moscow was already moving on. I confronted the Politburo point-blank with an alternative: either change the operational plan, or evacuate Tula, ruining the military industry and opening the way to Moscow. The commander-in-chief, changing the old plan piecemeal, was already concentrating his fist. But by this time, the stubbornness of the commander-in-chief, which supported the Politburo, was

broken."

In mid-October, a new grouping of troops for a counterattack was completed. One group was concentrated to the north-west of Orel for action on the Kursk-Oryol railway. Another group, east of Voronezh, was led by Budyonny's cavalry corps. This was already a step towards the grouping that Trotsky, Lashevich and Serebryakov insisted on for the last time on September 6. The aforementioned trinity quite reasonably planned to strike the main blow against Denikin in the workers' Donbass, sympathetic to the Red Army, and not in the hostile Cossack regions of the Don and Kuban.

Army General I. V. Tyulenev left us an expressive sketch of Budyonny on the eve of the decisive battles. Ivan Vasilievich, appointed assistant chief of staff of the cavalry corps, introduced himself to Budyonny in August 1919: "In the courtyard of the house where Budyonny was located, I was met by a young woman, as I found out later, the wife of Semyon Mikhailovich Nadezhda Ivanovna. When I asked her where I could see the commander, she shouted in the direction of the shed:

"Sema, are you coming soon?" A friend has come to you. In response from the barn heard:

Where is he, this comrade? Let him come here.

I went into the barn, I looked - two people were standing, dressed in green cloth jackets. One is tall, the other is medium height. I go up to the tall one, report on the arrival, and he, laughing, nods his head in the direction of another horse, cleaning the hooves. I am embarrassed and silent. Nadezhda Ivanovna comes up to us and says, turning to her husband: - Sema, stop messing with your horse, your comrade is waiting for you. Budyonny looked up from his work, looked me over from head to toe

searchingly, and smiled slyly: "Tyulenev? Welcome. What, did you come to fight or just to see how we fight? Tomorrow is a big fight. I'm preparing a horse for myself. Will you have time to get ready in the morning to go with us to

beat the enemy? I mumbled something back, meaning "I'll make it." Budyonny grinned

into his mustache: - Probably, they thought that at the headquarters of the corps you would only have to deal with papers? No, brother, we don't do that. To fight like this, to fight for real, not with a pencil, but with a saber. However, it is also not a sin to own a pen. We have a great shortage of such people, we tortured the chief of staff Pogrebov with this case. So you will be his assistant. This, of course, does not mean that you will stay long at the headquarters. We have staff workers more

on horseback with a saber in hand ... - I obey, Comrade Budyonny! - overcame shyness I".

Further, Tyulenev notes: "Semyon Mikhailovich Budyonny, together with the headquarters of the corps, was constantly on the most difficult

plots."

From this memoir evidence, we can conclude that Budyonny did not like staff work. He liked to lead directly on the battlefield and felt best during a dashing cavalry charge. According to his psychology, Semyon Mikhailovich remained a typical field commander for the rest of his life. At the same time, he was easy to handle, not arrogant, with all his subordinates he behaved evenly and affably, he knew how to win their sympathy. Budyonny's second finest hour after Tsaritsyn came near Voronezh in the fall of 1919, when General Denikin's Armed Forces of the South of Russia were rushing towards Moscow. The VSYUR launched their general offensive in June 1919, when they repelled the attempts of the Red Army to recapture the Donbass, although losing part of the Don region. On June 25, the volunteers took the capital of Soviet Ukraine Kharkov, the next day - Yekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk). On June 30, the Caucasian army of General Pyotr Wrangel captured the heavily fortified Tsaritsyn, the most important center of defense of the Reds. On July 3, Denikin announced the so-called "Moscow Directive", which set the ultimate goal of capturing Moscow. By that time, the forces subordinate to him numbered about 105 thousand bayonets and sabers, which was not enough for an offensive on a wide front of almost 1000 kilometers against an enemy outnumbered. Denikin's troops, like the Red Army, had long been recruited through forced mobilization. Lenin astutely remarked that mass mobilization would ruin Denikin, just as it had ruined Kolchak before. And so it happened. Why didn't mobilization damage the Red Army? The point was the different social composition of the armed forces of the opposing sides. The middle peasants made up the majority of both the Whites and the Reds, and equally often moved from one to the other and back, or deserted and returned to their native villages. The outcome of the war was determined by the ratio between the more or less reliable contingents of the Red Army and its opponents. And here a clear advan

side of the Bolsheviks. They could rely almost entirely on the support of the workers, as well as the rural poor and landless farm laborers, who made up more than a quarter of the entire peasantry. These categories of the population could be mobilized without much difficulty and sent to fight in any province for rations, monetary allowances and ammunition - they still had nothing to lose at home. Lenin spoke well about this in April 1919 in connection with the mobilization to the Eastern Front:

"We take people from hungry places and transfer them to grain places. By giving everyone the right to two twenty-pound food parcels a month and making them free, we will simultaneously improve the food situation of the starving capitals and northern provinces. In fact, it was a slightly disguised embodiment of the old Bolshevik slogan "Rob the loot!" In addition, attracted by the

internationalist ideology of the Bolsheviks, many former prisoners fought on their side: Austrians, Hungarians, deserters from the Czechoslovak corps, as well as Latvians and Estonians, whose homeland was occupied by German troops.

There were many Chinese and Koreans in the Red Army, during the First World War they were used for work in the front line. The Latvian and international units fought stubbornly, because in the event of a defeat they could not count on leniency, and showed complete ruthlessness towards the local population. The whites, on the other hand, had far fewer staunch cadres: officers, junkers and a small part of the intelligentsia, ready to fight the Bolsheviks either for the future Constituent Assembly or for the restoration of the monarchy (these last two groups were also at enmity with each other). In general, out of about 250 thousand officers of the Russian army, about 75 thousand ended up in the ranks of the Red Army, up to 80 thousand did not take part in the Civil War at all, and only about 100 thousand served in anti-Soviet formations (including the armies of Poland, the Ukrainian People's Republic, the Transcaucasian and Baltic states). As for the wealthy peasants and Cossacks hostile to the Bolsheviks, they often did not want to fight outside their province or region, so as not to move away from

economy. This limited the ability of the White armies to conduct large-scale offensive operations and quickly transfer units from one sector of the front to another. During the offensive launched in July 1919, Denikin's army instead of Moscow, as planned, moved to Ukraine, capturing its eastern part and the Dnieper region with Kiev and Yekaterinoslav. On August 31, units of the Volunteer Army and the troops of "independent Ukraine" under the command of Symon Petliura simultaneously entered Kiev. Under pressure from the volunteers, the Ukrainians were forced to leave the city. As a result, Denikin received a new enemy in the person of Petliura and was forced to divert several thousand fighters to fight the UNR army. Even worse was the loss of time. Only on September 12, Denikin's troops launched an offensive in the Moscow direction itself. By that time, Kolchak's armies had already been thoroughly defeated, and it was not difficult for the Soviet command to transfer the bulk of the troops from the Eastern Front to the South against the new threat. Denikin managed to succeed largely thanks to the Cossack cavalry corps. To cope with them, the Red Army needed cavalry. On September 20, 1919, the chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, L. D. Trotsky, threw the slogan "Proletarian, on the horse!" Within the framework of this call, the Cavalry was formed, although Trotsky himself preferred to leave the Budyonovsky formation as a corps so that it could be attached to one or another army at the discretion of the front command. This was due to the fact that Lev Davydovich did not believe in the strategic abilities of Budyonny and Voroshilov and had

their foundations.

Trotsky recalled the formation of the red cavalry in this way: "The most difficult thing was to create cavalry, because the old cavalry had its homeland in the steppes inhabited by rich peasants and Cossacks. The creation of the cavalry was the highest achievement of this period. On the fourth anniversary of the Red Army on February 23, 1922, Pravda, in an essay on the civil war, gave the following image of the formation of the red cavalry:

Kozlov and Tambov. "Proletarian, on horseback! - the cry of Comrade Trotsky - was met with enthusiasm in the formation of cavalry masses, and already on October 19 Budyonny's army smashes Mamontov near Voronezh." The campaign to create the red cavalry was the main content of my work during the months of 1919. The army, as it is said, the worker built, mobilizing the peasant. The worker had an advantage over the peasant not only in his general level, but especially in the ability to handle weapons, with new equipment. This provided the workers in the army with a double advantage. With the cavalry, the situation was different. Motherland the cavalry were the Russian steppes, the best cavalry were the Cossacks, followed by rich steppe peasants who had horses and knew the horse. The cavalry was the most reactionary branch of the army and supported the tsarist regime the longest. It was necessary that the Petrograd and Moscow proletarians should first mount their horses, if only in the role of commissars or simple fighters, so that they would create strong and reliable revolutionary cells in squadrons and regiments. Such was the meaning of the slogan "Proletarian, on the horse!". The whole country, all industrial cities were covered with posters with this slogan. I traveled around the country from end to end and gave assignments about the formation of cavalry squadrons to reliable Bolsheviks, workers. My secretary Poznansky was personally involved in the formation of cavalry units with great success. Only this work of the proletarians, mounted on a horse, turned loose partisan detachments into really well-proportioned cavalry units. Budyonny probably accepted without enthusiasm the slogan: "Proletarian, on the horse!" Indeed, in practice, it meant that more commissars, communists and just workers would appear in the cavalry divisions, who stayed in the saddle like a bag of potatoes, but were considered "trustworthy" by the new government. But Semyon Mikhailovich prudently kept silent. From the point of view of Trotsky, the presence of a proletarian stratum in the Budyonnovsky freemen was supposed to increase the stability of the cavalry in battle, since the proletarians h

red cavalymen, as well as their white opponents. As a result, the fighting capacity of the Cavalry really grew, but the fight against robberies and Jewish pogroms, as we will see later, turned out to be a disastrous thing - they did not stop until the very end of the Civil War. But Budyonny, Voroshilov and other leaders of the Cavalry, with the help of commissars and communists, still managed to avoid complete decomposition, not stopping before the execution of the rioters, so that after each next wave of robberies and violence, the First Cavalry was able to continue fighting. Near Voronezh, the 1st Red Cavalry Corps of Budyonny defeated the main cavalry force of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia - the Don Corps under the command of General Konstantin Konstantinovich Mamontov and the Kuban Corps of General Andrei Grigoryevich Shkuro. Here is how A.I. Egorov described the fighting near Voronezh in the book "The Defeat of Denikin": "At that time, Budyonny's corps was concentrated in the village of the Kazanskaya Don army on the left (eastern) bank of the Don, with the task of crossing the Don and striking south east along the rear of the 2nd and 1st Don Corps in the context of the Don and Volunteer armies. The operation was scheduled for

September 17 ... Having learned about the new raid of Mamantov (this is a more correct spelling of the name of the general, whom Soviet historians for some reason began to call Mamontov. -

B.S.) , Budyonny violated the order of his commander of the southeastern red front, Shorin, arbitrarily turned his corps to the north and moved to Talovaya, which was 150 versts from the village of Kazanskaya, in order to defeat Mamantov's corps. Following Mamantov, Budyonny, passing Talovaya, moved further north to the village of Tulina, passing 250 miles in 10 days. From here he moved to Usman Sobakino and Grafskaya, where he met with two Cossack

corps - Mamantov and Shkuro. Egorov writes that after occupying Ramon and Grafskaya, Shkuro's corps rushed north, to Usman, and further to Gryaz, as both the report of the Don Army and General Denikin speak of. The Mamantovsky corps sought to keep in touch with

Don Corps, to the southeast, scattered along the front for 50 miles. According to Yegorov, "Budyonny's cavalry corps was ordered: with the cavalry units of the 8th Army assigned to it, to defeat this enemy cavalry and to assist the 8th Army with its active actions in fulfilling its assigned task - to re-enter the line of the Don River. However, not without reason, Budyonny considered it impossible to leave in his rear and on the left flank such an active enemy as Mamantov, and, wishing at the same time to alleviate the position of his 12th and 13th divisions, set his immediate goal to defeat and discard Mamantovsky frame. October 1, in the area with. Moscow, Budyonny enters into single combat with Mamantov and gradually pushes his units to the north-west. The latter retreat to Voronezh ... But on the left flank the situation is extremely unfavorable for the army: units of the 3rd Don Corps developed their initial success, and the 9th Army rolled back further and further to the northeast and east, dragging along the flanks 8 th army. On

October 6, Budyonny approached the Novo-Usman line. At 7 o'clock in the morning, 12 enemy regiments launched an offensive. A fierce and stubborn battle ensued, lasting until late at night. As a result of the battle, White was overturned. Budyonny approached Voronezh. The next day, the cavalry corps went on the offensive again, but the Whites managed to organize resistance during the night, and the battle was not successful ... Having occupied Voronezh and pushed the Shkuro and Mamantov corps to the west of Lon, Budyonny's corps, despite the grandiose moral effect of this circumstance, nevertheless did not reach the main thing - both white corps suffered heavy losses, received a very tangible blow, but were not defeated, which mainly explains the slow advance of the Budyonny

Cavalry Corps in the following days. One of the reasons for the defeat of the Whites near Voronezh was that at a critical moment they had to transfer part of Shkuro's corps to the south of Ukraine to fight Makhno. On September 25, the commander of the

received from Taganrog, from the headquarters of General Denikin, the following telegram: "Immediately send one of the cavalry divisions of the corps of General Shkuro to the Volnovakha station." Further telegrams were repeated almost every day, acquiring an increasingly alarming tone - the Makhnovists went on the offensive, threatening to completely drive Denikin out of Ukraine. On October 4, Sidorin received another order: "Bypassing all sorts of obstacles, tomorrow, October 5, move the Terek division to the south, at the disposal

of General Revishin." On October 6, Denikin himself telegraphed: "According to the latest information, the Gorsko-Mozdok regiment is in battle east of the village of Davydovka (50 kilometers south of Voronezh. - B.S.) , and the Volgovsky regiment is again brought into action near Voronezh. I order to immediately withdraw the division from the battle and hastily lead to the rear. The Makhnovists have occupied Alexandrovsk, Melitopol, Berdyansk, and today they are advancing on Mariupol. The crime of those who detain the division cannot be justified by anything (Taganrog, October 6, 4 o'clock in the morning. Denikin). The very next day, October 7, the commander of the Volunteer Army, General May-Maevsky, telegraphed General Shkuro about Denikin's categorical demand: "Immediately, bypassing all obstacles, send the Terek division at the disposal of General Revishin." The same telegram stated that "General

Likhachev is sent to investigate the reasons for the division's delay." On October 8, General Mai-Maevsky again informed Shkuro and Sidorin: "Mariupol is occupied by the Makhnovists, which already creates a threat to the headquarters. I hope that in view of such a situation, despite the difficult situation known to me in which you are before the approach of Mamantov's units, nevertheless, with your characteristic energy, you will immediately and decisively take all measures to ensure that the Terek division is transferred to General Revishin as soon as possible. term". To these disturbing telegrams from the headquarters in Taganrog, General Sidorin replied: "I ordered a landing on Likhaya from Kantemirovka, my only reserve, the Tula Infantry Brigade. At the same time, I

sent to Liski station today at 17:30 to the destination. The loading of the brigade will end on the morning of October 7.”

Having learned in time about the weakening of Shkuro's corps, the Reds immediately resumed the offensive. On October 6, Budyonny occupied the Peredatochnaya station in the evening, 7 kilometers east of Voronezh, and cut off the railway route to the south, to Liski, where on October 7 one of the brigades of the Terek division was loaded. The second brigade with General Vladimir Agoev moved west by rail, through the junction station Kastornaya, then heading south to Volnovakha. Here is what Budyonny himself wrote about the battles near Voronezh: “October 4, on the way of our movement from Vorobyovka to Talovaya, an airplane appeared above the corps column. It was not difficult to determine that the plane belonged to the Whites, since neither the 8th, nor the 9th, nor the 10th Red Armies had aviation. The plane made a turn and began to circle over the columns of divisions. It was immediately ordered to lower the banners and wave their hats to everyone. The plane descended even more, made a U-turn and went to land. He did not have time to stop yet, as he was surrounded on all sides by cavalrymen.

The pilot jumped out of the cockpit and asked: - Are you mammoths? Yes, mammoths. Hands up! During the interrogation, it was established that the pilot flew from Voronezh with the task of finding Mamontov in the Talovaya, Bobrov,

Buturlinovka triangle and conveying to him General Sidorin's order and Shkuro's

letter. The order and letter confiscated from the pilot contained very valuable information for us. Sidorin, in his order, set the group of General Savelyev and the corps of General Mamontov to encircle and destroy the 8th Red Army, ensuring the unhindered advance of the Don Army to Moscow.

Sidorin's appetite turned out to be great. One could only be surprised at his poor knowledge: he set the task for the group of General Savelyev,

In a note attached to the order, Sidorin recommended that Mamontov contact the deputy commander of the 8th Red Army, Rotaisky. "Act quickly and decisively," Sidorin wrote, "you can rely on Rotaisky." Shkuro, in his letter, reported that he had occupied Voronezh, and asked Mamontov to send him ammunition, since he expected the Reds to attack from the north, but did not have ammunition. Shkuro, apparently, expected that Mamontov, starting a new raid on the rear of the 8th Army, would share with him the stolen property and ammunition. Sidorin's order and Shkuro's letter were immediately sent to the commander of the 9th Red Army, Stepin, with a request to familiarize themselves with them and urgently send them to the headquarters of the Southern Front. Late in the evening of October 4, we entered Talovaya station. Parts of the corps, tired from the long march, settled down for the night in the villages adjacent to the station. It turned out that Mamontov had been in Talovaya the previous night, but at four o'clock in the morning the alarm was raised among the whites, and Mamontov, forgetting his serviceable passenger car in a hurry, set out with the corps along the railway in the direction of Voronezh. Finally, we found Mamontov ... Our pursuit of Mamontov began with Talova. He left along the railroad, destroying bridges on his way, shooting railroad workers. The working people of the Voronezh province greeted us with great joy. People invited fighters to their homes, shared bread and clothes with them, gave the last stocks of hay for our horses. Thousands of people asked to be accepted into the corps. There were so many volunteers that we decided to accept only those who had their own horse, saddle and sword. The rest were grouped into teams and sent to replenish the 8th Army (Trotsky's idea to attack non-Cossack areas turned out to be fruitful; I note that Budyonny and Voroshilov initially held the same opinion. - B.S.) While the Cavalry Corps pursued Mamontov, the 8th Army, in the rear of which the pu

pressured by the enemy from the front, she left the line of the Don River and began to retreat, especially on her right flank, from the direction of Voronezh. The situation was complicated by the fact that a major betrayal occurred in the leadership of the army: the deputy commander of the army, the same former tsarist general Rotaisky, whom Sidorin mentioned in his note, went over to the side of the whites with a group of staff military experts. Having lost faith in its command and upset by the Mamontov raid, the 8th Army, following Voronezh, left Liski and rolled east, losing contact with neighboring armies. The case could have ended in complete disaster for the 8th Army if the Cavalry Corps had not timely defeated the group of General Savelyev on the Don and had not gone to Talovaya to

counter Mamontov. On the night of October 7, when the corps concentrated in the area of Sergeevka, Martyn, Romanovka, Nashchekino, I received a directive from the commander of the Southern Front, signed by A.I. Egorov and I.V. Stalin.

The directive said: "According to the directive of the Commander-in-Chief No. 4780 / op, your corps is transferred directly to me, the 8th Army retreats to the line of the Ikorets River from Tulikov station to Ustyia. According to reports, Mamontov and Shkuro joined in Voronezh and

operate in

direction to Gryazi. I order: Budyonny Corps to find and defeat Mamontov and Shkuro. To reinforce you, I order the commander of the 8th to transfer to you the cavalry group of the 8th army and the 56th cavalry brigade. The latter is conditional, if you recognize it as desirable, because, according to available information, it is inclined to evade battles and not carry out combat orders. In addition, you are given the right to demand from the commander of the 8th one or two infantry battalions to ensure the stability of your actions. Feed the corps with ammunition through the

headquarters 8. Keep in touch with

me through Shtarm 8 or by radio via Kozlov. Receiving this order,

report ... "In accordance with the task received, the corps was concentrated north

having a direct connection with the right flank of the 8th Army. By this time, the reconnaissance of the corps had established contact with the cavalry group of the 8th Army subordinate to our corps, which on October 12, under pressure from the enemy, withdrew from Grafskaya to Devitsa (several

kilometers southeast of Usman). Intelligence also established that the enemy from the Grafskaya area was spreading in the direction of Upper Khava. Based on the prevailing situation, on the morning of October 13, I ordered the corps to concentrate for delivering a decisive blow to Grafskaya. The divisions of the corps and the cavalry group of the 8th Army went to the initial areas for the attack, but the enemy, not accepting the battle, withdrew in the direction of Voronezh. Late at night on October 13, the corps was ordered to go on the offensive in the morning, capture Tresvyatskaya and reach the line Ramon, Uglyanets, Tresvyatskaya, Chebyshevka. However, on the morning of October 14, the enemy, with the help of eight cavalry regiments of Shkuro, went on the offensive in the direction of Tresvyatskaya, Gorki, Orlovo in order to strike at the left flank of the corps. The corps, repulsing the enemy attacks, went on the counteroffensive. As a result of a four-hour battle in the area of Tresvyatskaya, Orlovo, the enemy suffered heavy losses and retreated in the direction of Babyakovo, New

Usman. The cavalry corps went to the area of Orlovo, Gorki, Tresvyatskaya, Nikonovo. On October 15, the whites in large forces, with the support of three armored trains, again went on the offensive on Orlovo and at first pushed back parts of the 4th division, but they did not have to use success for long.

The 4th division launched a counterattack and pushed the Whites back to their original position. The enemy, who was defeated in the battle with the Cavalry Corps, withdrew to the Chertovitskoye, Borovoe, Novo-Usman line and on October 14 and 15 conducted enhanced reconnaissance of the location of the corps. Now our left flank was already operating in connection with units of the 8th Army, two rifle divisions of which - the 12th and 16th - having lost contact with the army headquarters, temporarily passed into our operational subordination. However, the right flank of the corps remained open.

The concentration of large forces of white cavalry to the north and northeast of Voronezh

unprotected flank of the corps, in the gap between the 8th and 13th armies. The question arose before us: whether to continue the attack on Voronezh or to put the corps in order, and then deliver a decisive blow to the enemy. After analyzing the situation, we came to the conclusion that, due to a number of circumstances, an immediate attack by the corps on Voronezh was not advisable. Firstly, the corps was tired of many days of fighting. It was necessary to give at least a short rest in order to put the units in order and pull up the rear. Secondly, there was not enough accurate information about the enemy forces in Voronezh. We knew that Mamontov's and Shkuro's corps were in Voronezh, but it was possible that other units of the Whites were also in Voronezh. Thirdly, we did not have any information about the enemy's defense system on the approaches to Voronezh and in Voronezh itself and did not have data on the possibility of forcing such a serious water barrier as the Voronezh River. Fourthly, time was also needed for the right-flank units of the 8th Army to prepare for joint operations with the corps. When embarking on such a serious operation as capturing Voronezh with an open right flank, it was necessary to secure at least its left flank. On October 16, taking into account the current situation, I listened to the opinion of the division commanders and, after consulting with the commissar and chief of staff of the corps, gave the corps an order to consolidate along the Izlegosha, Ramon, Tresvyatskaya, Rykan line in order to prepare a decisive blow in order to capture Voronezh ... Waiting for the enemy to attack - that was my final decision. This decision was announced at a meeting of commanders and commanders, commanders of brigades, regiments and their chiefs of staff. I ordered commanders of all levels, commissars and chiefs of staff to prepare units and formations for battle at any moment with full effort and conduct enhanced reconnaissance of the enemy ... For three days the corps stood near Voronezh, waiting for the enemy to

At the meeting, we compiled and then sent to Voronezh with two captured Cossacks an appeal to the working Cossacks who were in the ranks of the White

Army. The appeal said:

“Brothers, labor Cossacks!

Releasing your villagers captured by our scouts on October 16 of this year, Fyodor Zozel and Andrey Resun of the 1st partisan regiment of the 5th hundred, we declare to you that you are ruining yourself and your people in vain families you left far away in the Kuban and the Don, fighting with us. We know what we are fighting for - for the freedom of our working people, and you - for the generals, landowners who take bread and cattle from your fathers and wives, send them to England in exchange for cartridges, shells and cannons, with which you blindly kill the same working brothers, peasants and Cossacks, who are fighting for a better future for all the working people.

(mustache) senior

(arch) rank (nickname) S. Budyonny. Don Cossack, inspector of the Concorps Efim Shchadenko. Cossack of the Golubinsky village S. A. Zotov. At the

same meeting, someone made a proposal that aroused cheerful approval - to write a letter to Shkuro. Notorious for his cruelty, Shkuro fancied himself a commander of the new time and envied the glory of others, in particular, the dark glory of General Mamontov. He considered himself the conqueror of Voronezh and was dissatisfied with the arrival of Mamontov in the city, as he was afraid to fall into his submission. Relations between Shkuro and Mamontov escalated from the very first days, when hundreds of Shkuro met the Mamontovites with machine-gun fire as they approached Voronezh. After the departure of Mamontov from Voronezh, Shkuro completely took power into his own hands ... Everyone wrote the letter, as the Cossacks wrote to the Turkish Sultan in

their time: not embarrassed in expressions, not adhering to diplomatic subtleties. If we exclude some overly colorful expressions, then the co

“Tomorrow I will take Voronezh. I oblige all counter-revolutionary forces to build on the Round Rows Square. I will host the parade. I order you to command the parade, you white guard bastard. After the parade, you will be hanged on a telegraph pole for all the atrocities, for the blood and tears of the workers and peasants, in the same place, on the Square of the Round Rows. And if you lost your memory, then I remind you: this is where you, a bloody thug, hung and shot workers and red fighters. My order is to announce to all personnel of the Voronezh White Guard garrison. Budyonny. Forwarding the letter to General Shkuro was not particularly difficult. Our scouts often made their way to Voronezh and knew perfectly well where Shkuro's headquarters were located. One of our dashing brave men, Oleko Dundich (a Croat whose real name was Tomo, was taken to take the letter. Having fallen into Russian captivity in 1916, he subsequently joined the Budyonny detachment. He died in battle in 1920. - B.S.) . In Voronezh, with a letter to General Shkuro, Dundich, dressed in the uniform of a White Guard officer, went in the evening. He safely reached Shkuro's headquarters, handed over the letter to the officer on duty, and then traveled all over the city, studying the enemy's defense system ... So, we expected the enemy to attack. Our expectation obviously caused dissatisfaction in the headquarters of the Southern Front. One must think that it was perceived at least as unacceptable slowness and insufficient decisiveness of the command of the Cavalry Corps. This is evidenced by the directive received by us on October 18 from the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front, copies of which were sent to the commanders of the 8th and 13th armies and the chief of staff of the Revolutionary Military Council of the republic. The directive said that an uprising against the Whites was growing in the Caucasus, that Shkuro was appointed commander of the troops against the rebels, one of whose divisions was already in the Caucasus and was defeated in battle, which, according to air reconnaissance, which discovered the transfer of echelons from Voronezh to Kastornoye, is the possibility of assuming that parts of the Shkuro corps from the Voronezh region

division and newly arrived units from the Novocherkassk, Rostov, Gundorovsky and Mityakinsky regiments that the left-flank units of the 13th Army crossed the Yelets-Kastornoye railway in the Ekaterinovka area, and from this it was concluded that "the general situation at the front requires the most

active actions." We knew nothing about the uprising in the Caucasus, did not use air reconnaissance data, did not have accurate information about the actions of the left-flank units of the 13th Red Army, but we knew the enemy in front of our corps well. We knew for certain that Shkuro's corps was in full strength in Voronezh and was the main striking force of the Whites. The assumptions based on air reconnaissance data about the transfer of white troops from Voronezh seemed unconvincing to us. If the pilots really noticed the trains following from Voronezh to Kastornoye, then these were most likely trains with property stolen in Voronezh and the

bourgeoisie who fled from Voronezh. The suggestion that Shkuro's corps was being replaced by the Tula division was tantamount to asserting that the Whites had decided to surrender Voronezh. The Tula division was a Soviet formation captured by Mamontov during his first raid in the area of Gryazi, Tambov, Kozlov. When retreating to the south, Mamontov took this division with him and placed it in the Nizhnedevitsk area. This division did not represent a serious force - it literally scattered. Deserters from the Tula division, alone, in small and even large groups, made their way through the forests north of Voronezh to the location of parts of the Cavalry Corps, and we handed them over to the 12th Infantry Division. As for the Novocherkassk, Rostov, Gundorovsky and Mityakinsky regiments, such units either did not exist at all, or were not even close to Voronezh.

And on

the basis of these implausible assumptions, an instruction was given: "Do not draw parts of the hull into a positional arrangement, but act by maneuver. Immediately defeat the enemy in the Voronezh area."

the indicated line, having in the future the task of a swift maneuver in the direction of Kastornoye, Kursk. The compilers of the directive, apparently, had no idea about the current situation near Voronezh (great superiority of enemy forces, its undeniable positional advantage, weather conditions, etc.) ... I was especially surprised that Yegorov and Stalin signed this directive. This,

obviously, was explained by the fact that the headquarters of the Southern Front had not yet been completely cleared of fraudsters and misinformers, and they were able to put their hand in the directive. Someone, apparently, expected that by pushing the Cavalry Corps against the superior forces of the enemy, who had settled in Voronezh, he would lead him to defeat. But we were firm in our earlier decision - to wait for the White offensive - and had no doubt that the advancing enemy would be defeated, after which the corps would be able to strike in the area of Kastornaya station and thus fully fulfill the task set by the front command. While waiting for the enemy to attack, we tirelessly prepared units and formations for the most decisive, fierce battle I don't know if Shkuro was influenced by our letter, designed to infuriate him, but he, as expected, decided to take advantage of the fact that the Cavalry Corps had moved forward with an open flank, that the main forces of the 8th Army had not yet pulled up to Voronezh and that there was a big gap between the 8th

and 13th armies. On the fourth day of our expectation, when the rain stopped and was replaced by warm weather, and with it dense, impenetrable fogs, Shkuro went on the offensive.

On the night of October 19, his cavalry units set out from the Babyakovo, Novaya Usman region and at dawn, under the cover of fog, broke into the village of Khrenovoye and pushed back the barriers of the 6th Cavalry Division. But this success of the Whites was very short-lived. Having received information about the attack of the whites on Khrenovoe, the division chief Apanasenko deployed the main forces of the division into battle formation and launched a counteroffensive. Meanwhile, the 4th division, alerted,

to the aid of the 6th division. With a successful maneuver, Gorodovikov led his units behind enemy lines, connected by battle with the 6th division, and delivered a sudden blow to the White Guards. Heavy fog did not allow either us or the enemy to use machine guns and artillery, so the battle from the very first minutes took on the character of a fierce saber felling. Squeezed from the front and rear, the whites could not withstand the onslaught of our units and, leaving the village of Khrenovoye, ran in a panic in the direction of Voronezh, leaving artillery, machine guns, and sanitary lines stuck in the mud. However, the horses of the enemy, exhausted by the night march along the hard road, could no longer compete in agility with the horses of our fighters. The retreat path of the White Cossacks was strewn with their corpses. The pursuit of the enemy was carried out to the Voronezh River, where our forward units were stopped by the fire of armored cars and armored trains put forward by Shkuro to cover his cavalry. In addition, from the side of Somovo, with the support of armored trains, the enemy infantry launched a counteroffensive, trying to inflict a flank attack on our 6th division, which occupied the village of Babyakovo. But the White Guard infantry broke out too far and was completely cut down by the approaching brigade of the 4th Cavalry Division. The armored trains of the enemy acted most effectively. One of them, hidden in a railroad cut between Voronezh and Otrozhka station, fired on our units that had taken up defensive positions along the left bank of the Voronezh River, and those that were advancing along the railroad to Otrozhka station. Our gunners, who rolled out a gun for direct fire, could not knock out an armored train. Then I, with a squadron of a special reserve cavalry division, took my measures against the white armored trains. When we broke into Otrozhka station, there was a hospital train and several locomotives on the tracks. The head of the ambulance train, a woman in an officer's uniform from the Kuban, turned to me in confusion:

"What should I do?" "Stay where you are and wait," I told her casually. Driving up to to the driver of one of the locomotives, I ordered him to start the locomotive at full steam towards the armored train, which was maneuvering

between the stations Otrozhka and Tresvyatskaya. This order was immediately carried out, and as a result, the armored train, having crashed, ceased fire.

In order to paralyze the maneuver of the second armored train operating between Otrozhka and Voronezh, I instructed the railroad workers to blow up one span of the railway bridge. And this assignment was carried out by volunteers. By the evening of October 19, the advanced units of the corps occupied Otrozhka and Monastery. The enemy was severely defeated. The corps captured many prisoners and large trophies, including the General Guselytsikov armored train and the Azovets armored platform. The initiative was in our hands, but in view of the fact that parts of the corps were stretched out during the fighting, and also in connection with the onset of darkness, I decided that before inflicting a decisive blow on the enemy, it was necessary to bring up artillery and lagging behind. Therefore, the formations of the corps were ordered to withdraw to the Borovoye, Babyakovo, Novaya Usman line and put

themselves in order. At dawn on October 20, the corps, interacting with the 12th and 16th rifle divisions of the 8th army, went on the offensive with the task of capturing Voronezh, and a heated battle began on the eastern approaches to the city. During the night, the enemy managed to bring up fresh forces and gain a foothold at the turn of the Voronezh River, covering all available crossings with strong machine-gun and artillery fire. All day the battle was in full swing, not

giving an advantage to either side. The chief of staff of one of the White divisions, who was killed in battle, fell into our hands, and we found from him a combat order that helped us uncover Shkuro's plan. By this order, and also in the course of the battle, we established the concentration of the main enemy forces in the direction of Pridachi and Babyakovo to hold the crossings on the Voronezh River and subsequent counterattacks on the right flank of the corps. In this regard, I decided to deliver the main blow to Voronezh not from the east, where the main forces of Shkuro were concentrated, but from the north. Fulfilling this decision, the 6th cavalry division was to pin down the enemy from the front, advancing from the Nov[aya] Usman, Baby

Voronezh, and the 4th cavalry division with its subordinate reserve cavalry brigade (the former Filippov cavalry group) to force the Usman and Voronezh rivers in the village of Chertovitsky and, interacting with the 21st railway brigade, strike at Voronezh from north to south along the Zadonskoye highway.

The 4th division was assigned the main and most difficult task. She had to make a march through heavy wooded and swampy terrain, and then force large water barriers. The 12th Rifle Division of the 8th Army, interacting with the 6th Cavalry Division, advanced on the southeastern outskirts of Voronezh.

On October 21 and 22, the corps formations fought stubborn battles, fulfilling the tasks assigned to them. Particularly fierce battles flared up in the area of Otrozhka, Repnoe, Pridach. The enemy in this sector defended the crossings with desperate stubbornness, fired upon by almost all the artillery of our corps. On the night of October 22, an order was received from the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front, approving the actions of the Cavalry Corps ... On the morning of October 23, parts of the corps again went on the offensive. The artillery of the corps and the 12th Infantry Division and all the armored trains we had opened heavy fire on the enemy. The Whites exerted all their strength to repulse the attacks of the 6th division, advancing on Voronezh from the east, and the 12th rifle division from the southeast and prevent them from forcing the Voronezh River. A fierce battle ensued, lasting throughout the day. When it got dark, the enemy began to burn houses to illuminate the crossings on the river, but nothing could stop the units of the 6th Cavalry and 12th Rifle Divisions, which were

stubbornly moving forward ... Exactly at 6 o'clock in the morning on October 24, the Cavalry Corps divisions (4 from the north, 6th from the east and southeast) broke into Voronezh. At the same time, the 12th Infantry Division also entered the city. The 4th division, continuing the attack, rushed to the western outskirts of Voronezh in order to cut off the enemy's escape route to the Don River. The White Guards, sensing the threat of encirclement, attacked the 4th division with all their might and, breaking through, fled in a panic in a southwestern direction. Only the regiment of "Voronezh Cossacks

officers, officials and merchants, tried to resist. But these were futile attempts. Voronezh was already in our hands ... With the victory near

Voronezh, the situation began to change dramatically in favor of the Soviet troops. The cavalry corps went to the right flank of the main shock group of Denikin's army, which was rushing towards Moscow. The most important railway arteries and the rear of the whites, which fed their shock units in the Kursk and Orel regions, were

under threat. Already after the Civil War, at the VIII Congress of Soviets, in a personal conversation with me, V. I. Lenin asked: - Do you understand what your corps did near Voronezh?

"Destroyed the enemy," I replied. "It's so simple," Lenin smiled. And then he said: - If your corps had not been near Voronezh, Denikin could have thrown the cavalry of Shkuro and Mamontov onto the scales, and the republic would have been in especially

grave danger. After all, we lost the Eagle. The Whites approached Tula. And here is how General Andrei Grigorievich Shkuro, who opposed Budyonny, describes the battles for Voronezh. When reading his memoirs, one must remember that the pre-revolutionary old style, the Julian calendar, was preserved in the Armed Forces of the South of Russia, so that its dates are thirteen days late compared to the Budennovsk ones, given in the new style. Shkuro testified: "I received an order to take Voronezh. On September 6, my patrols collided with those of Mamontov, who was returning from the raid, because the Cossacks did not recognize each other. Soon the misunderstanding was cleared up, and on September 8 our corps joined at Korotoyak. Mamontov led countless convoys with refugees and booty. Suffice it to say that I, riding in a car, could not overtake them for two and a half hours. Mamontov's Cossacks were in full bloom, marching in disorder and, apparently, only trying to bring their prey to the huts as soon as possible.

She seemed to be quite wealthy; for example, the Kalmyks even sprayed their horses with perfume. Mamontov received a directive to move to the I

Konovalov and Guselshchikov, who vainly attacked this important junction station. Mamontov made a big mistake - he transferred to the left bank of the Don not only his troops, but also huge carts, having only a single narrow bridge in his rear. To protect his right flank, he put up only one cavalry regiment. Stretched out in an endless column along the low bank of the Don, Mamontov's people moved downstream. At this time, significant forces of the Reds, who occupied commanding heights bordering the lowlands, went on the offensive and, having shot down the flank regiment of the Donets, attacked the detachment on the flank. The convoys rushed into a stampede; the panic was also transmitted to the combat units; there was an unimaginable crush on the only bridge across the Don. Having installed machine guns, the Bolsheviks began to shell the bridge, inflicting losses on the mammoths and increasing confusion. Just at that time, I appeared from the opposite bank of the Don at the head of the 1st Caucasian division. Throwing the Wolf Division onto the bridge in whips and checkers, I cleared it and the area adjacent to it from the fugitives and immediately transferred two cavalry regiments along it across the Don, which, by order and display, shamed the Don people and went on the counterattack; they were joined by the Don division of Secretev. Soon the Reds were knocked down from the heights and driven away. However, in the meantime, another failure occurred at Mamontov: sent along the left bank, downstream of the Don, the Tula Infantry Division - the former Red Division, which had gone over to the side of Mamontov in Tula - was suddenly attacked, pressed against the river and defeated, and lost more than 3000 prisoners, all artillery and machine guns. The Don regiments, thrown to the rescue, attacked, in turn, the winners, took away artillery, part of the machine guns and recaptured up to 2000 captured Tulchan. Then, having put the carts in order, Mamontov transferred them back to the right bank of the Don. However, my Cossacks did manage to smash the abandoned wagons; many were already flaunting in new clothes and even in galoshes ... Without waiting for the other regiments to approach, the two regiments that had crossed earlier rushed to attack Voronezh, but were repulsed. The city was heavily fortified with several tiers of trenches with a thick wire network in front. For

numerous railway lines; there was also heavy artillery. However, apparently, the spirit of the defenders was not up to par, because the numerous trains leaving Voronezh testified to the evacuation of the city that had begun. September 16, I attacked the city. Several attacks were repulsed and casualties mounted. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon, the Wolf Division, partisans and the Gorsko-Mozdok regiment rushed to the horse attack. When they galloped up to the wire in a furious career and began to cut it with checkers, the garrison of the trenches took to flight; so did the armored cars. The station was taken. A street battle began with the retreating detachments of the Reds. They fled to the outskirts of the city, blowing up the bridges across the Voronezh River behind them.

Our artillery started an artillery battle with them. Taking advantage of the confusion of the Reds, the Rifle Brigade built a bridge across the Don on the night of September 17 and at dawn, together with the Volga regiment attached to it, invaded the city. The frightened Reds also fled from the suburbs. We became the owners of the city, and most importantly, almost the entire railway line Voronezh - Liski passed into our use ...

In Voronezh, we took 13,000 prisoners, 35 guns, countless carts and huge warehouses, but somewhat plucked by the Cossacks, who now all flaunted in new tunics, boots and ... galoshes. The headquarters of the Red 13th Army voluntarily surrendered (except for the commander, who recently died). The temporary commander of the army, the former chief of staff of the General Staff, Captain Tarasov, gave extremely valuable testimony. He explained (and confirmed this with orders) that all the time he purposely exposed individual units of the Red 13th Army under our blows; he also said that Budyonny, having completed the formation of the Cavalry, was moving with it from the east, having the task of smashing me and Mamontov separately.

Captain

Tarasov and his subordinates were accepted into the service of the Dobrarmia. The population of Voronezh, which had recently endured cruel repressions from the Bolsheviks for the enthusiastic reception they gave to Mamontov, who was passing through the city, behaved some

From houses, cellars and dungeons, more and more, amazingly mutilated corpses of the victims of the Bolshevik executioners were pulled out all the time. The grief of people who have identified their tortured loved ones is indescribable. The local Extraordinary Commission, which had been completely captured, was cut down by the Cossacks who captured it. Some of the Jews who were suspected of being close to the Bolsheviks also suffered ... The released officers, workers and even peasants willingly signed up for the Rifle Brigade, which I began to expand into a division. On September 8, I moved 30–40 versts beyond the limits of the zone I occupied. However, Guselshchikov never approached Voronezh. Some demoralization of the Cossacks has already begun to be felt in the city. Vague rumors began to reach them from the Kuban about disagreements between the Kuban people's representation and the High Command. "We are fighting alone," said the Cossacks. - They told us that all of Russia would rise up, then we would drive away the Bolsheviks, but the peasants did not come; we alone suffer. Many of us have already been beaten. Where are the new buildings that were promised? All the same Kornilovites, Markovites, Drozdovites, but we Cossacks. - Here the Rada stands up for us, but Denikin does not favor her for that. We alone cannot overcome all the red evil spirits. Soon we will all be beaten; then again the Bolsheviks will conquer the Kuban. During my tours of the regiments, the Cossacks often asked me sensitive questions. What could I answer them, cut off for almost three months from the Kuban and not knowing myself what, in essence, was going on there? The Cossacks began to strive for their homeland under various pretexts. All who had the right to be evacuated for health reasons and who had previously remained voluntarily in the ranks now sought to exercise their right. Regimental commanders were inundated with applications for leave. Some Cossacks deserted, taking with them their horses and booty acquired by looting. Others gathered in whole groups and demanded wagons for themselves on my behalf, or even simply seized them by force. Due to the lack of proper supervision on the railways, deserters traveled with impunity to the Kuban and Terek u

the envy of the odnostanniks, whose sons and brothers continued to risk their lives on the battlefield.

The size of the corps began to decrease rapidly and in September reached 2500-3000 sabers. It became clear that in view of the weakening of the number of our cavalry and the expected appearance of Budyonny's cavalry, it was necessary either to rush to a raid on Moscow, in order to then put the army cheered up by success in order and then finish off the discouraged remnants of the Red Army, or, having gathered all the available cavalry into a fist, including the Don one, to throw it at Budyonny and destroy him before he has time to draw his inexperienced units into work and become dangerous for us. However, my reports in this sense remained ineffectual. It was painful to look at what was happening on the ground. The general enthusiasm of the first days after the liberation of the region from the Bolsheviks, upon the arrival of the volunteer administration and a pack of landowners who hurried with hearts full of revenge to their ruined estates, was replaced by distrust and even hatred.

"They meet us after the father, see us off after the mother," said some volunteers. In view of the fact that those who voluntarily joined the troops fled to their homes, disappointed in the frequently changing and unfulfilled slogans of the Dobroarmiya, it was staffed mainly by captured Red Army soldiers. Among them, of course, there were convinced opponents of Bolshevism, but the vast majority consisted of people who had no desire at all to fight, or, all the less, to lay down their bones for a cause alien to them; so they invariably gave in as soon as the situation became dangerous. The winners, both white and red, spared prisoners from among those who were forcibly mobilized; these warriors carried documents with them, indicating that they were really mobilized, and most of them had certificates

issued by both whites and reds. The Volunteer Army dressed these soldiers in new English uniforms, which then passed to the Reds along with their owners. There were dodgers who managed to serve 3

in each of the hostile armies, and the concerns about their multiple equipment fell exclusively on the Dobrarmia, because the Bolsheviks did not equip their infantry ... Rumors began to be heard about the approach of Budyonny with 15,000 cavalry, well-equipped and having an excellent horse composition. Just at that time, the newly revived Makhnovists took Berdyansk and Mariupol, already threatening Taganrog, where the Headquarters was. A commotion began there, and I received a telegraphic order to send the 1st Terek Division to Taganrog. I protested and said that in this case I would be forced to clear Voronezh. The commander of the Don Army, General Sidorin, to whom I was temporarily subordinate, called me to the apparatus and asked me to hold on, promising to send Mamontov's corps soon to Voronezh. I prepared for defense

and held the Terts until Mamontov's approach. One morning, a sensational report was received that in the Usman-Sobakino region, the Tertsy were attacked by Budyonny's cavalry, but overturned it; it turned out that it was ... the vanguard of Mamontov's corps. The misunderstanding was clarified by questioning the captured Donets; however, at that time the Tertsians were really attacked, and, moreover, quite suddenly, by the red cavalry. It was a regiment of red Petrograd cadet cadets, consisting of about 1000 checkers. The riders sat on excellent horses and were dressed in leather jackets, blue trousers with piping and red caps with a Bolshevik star. Their success was short-lived, because the approaching Don division of Secretev hit the cadets right in the rear. The recovered Terts also attacked them. The overturned and pressed to the river cadets, despite the desperate defense, were cut down without exception. There was great jubilation at Mamontov's approach. In Voronezh, with a huge gathering of the public, a solemn prayer service was served in front of the Mitrofanovsky Monastery. One brigade of the Terek division was sent to Taganrog. Mamontov soon fell ill and evacuated; I took command of the entire cavalry group and received an order to detach two Donets brigades also near Taganrog.

General Denikin. Having handed over temporary command to General Gubish, I left for Kharkov in my train, served to Voronezh along the corrected Voronezh-Liski road, at the end of September; I was late for the meeting and arrived in Kharkov after the departure of the Commander-in-Chief. The meeting continued under the chairmanship of May-Maevsky, with the participation of Generals Kutepov and Yuzefovich. General Sidorin, due to military circumstances, could not come to the meeting; his opinion on questions

that arose was requested by telegraph calls. The Don command insisted that I leave Voronezh and cover Liski; otherwise, it demanded back the 4th Don Mammoth Corps. On the contrary, Kutepov asked me to hold Voronezh and spread to the west, covering his right flank; he said that in the event of the surrender of Voronezh, his right flank would be exposed and he would irresistibly roll to the south, for he was already holding on with extreme exertion of strength. I argued that both tasks, if Budyonny was not done away with, were beyond my strength, and insisted on the need to immediately gather the cavalry into a fist to eliminate Budyonny's cavalry army. In view of the fact that Mai-Maevsky finally ordered me to defend Voronezh in the name of the Commander-in-Chief, and in case it was impossible to retreat to the west, I, considering this order impossible for me, resigned. However, Mai-Maevsky, refusing to accept it, forwarded it to the Commander-in-Chief, who also refused to let me resign. I had to take on a task that I was convinced was impossible. My situation was further complicated by the fact that I was temporarily subordinate to the Don command, which resolutely opposed the acceptance of the order I received ... I returned to Voronezh on October 2, and on the Voronezh-Liski section, my train was fired upon by red artillery. When he then, crowded with the wounded, went back, he was already attacked by the infantry. The train stopped. The lightly wounded scattered into a chain and repelled the attackers, while suffering losses from enemy machine-

the railway bridge was blown up by the Reds, but then again fixed by us. It

was restless in Voronezh. Frightened by rumors about Budyonny's approach, the population was worried and awaited events with trepidation. I ordered the immediate evacuation of government valuables and banks. In view of the frequent attacks on the railway line, the goods and passenger traffic along it had to be stopped. There were only armored trains. On October 4, I authorized the evacuation of the city for the civilian population who wished to leave it. Huge convoys of refugees stretched to Nizhne-Devitsk, Novy Oskol and Kastornaya. The Don regiments had already had several clashes with the advanced units of Budyonny, unsuccessful for them. This instilled in them an excessive caution towards him, and their spirits

fell somewhat. Suddenly, the Don command demanded that I go on the offensive and defeat Budyonny. It was completely unbearable for me. What could I do with my 5,000 checkers

against Budyonny's 15,000 fresh cavalry? Refusing categorically to carry out this order, I decided to defend myself. Ordered to build in case of retreat three bridges across the Don against Voronezh, near the village of Gvozdevki;

The rifle division was garrisoned in Voronezh; I decided to keep the Dontsov in contact with the enemy, but no further than a half-way from the city, and to have the Caucasian and the Terts brigade that I still had as a common mobile reserve ... On October 4,

Budyonny's division, nine regiments, was groped in the Usman-Sobakin area. I decided to attack her suddenly and destroy

her. The Tertsy, whose departure to Taganrog was scheduled for October 6, were to attack from the village of Usman-Sobakino, the Caucasians from the village of Grafskaya. The Donets of

the Seretev division also approached this area. On October 5, just before light, the Tertsy attacked one of the regiments of the Red Division at the bivouac, chopped and dispersed the riders, taking up to 400 horses and machine guns. At this time, 2-3 cavalry

regiments appeared, marching at a trot to the battlefield. The Terts believed that these were the Don, but it turned out that

they were red. Approaching a mile and a half, they rushed to the attack. Tertsy, ta

the division, in turn, hit the flank of the Reds and saved the Tertsians from defeat, allowing them to recover. Both sides dismounted; A long and fruitless firefight ensued. By evening, the Tertsy were withdrawn from the battle and left for Taganrog, taking with them the impression that a new and serious enemy had entered the game in the

face of Budyonny's cavalry. A series of battles began around Voronezh with the initiative on the side of Budyonny. At first, he showed sufficient illiteracy - he attacked me simultaneously at many points in small detachments. Leaving these points willingly to him, I then attacked small detachments with the superior forces of my reserve and destroyed them. Perhaps Budyonny heard something about a similar method used by Napoleon, but apparently did not grasp its essence. In these battles, I managed to break up to two brigades of the red cavalry and take trophies. However, Budyonny, realizing from experience the unprofitability of his tactics, changed it and did not risk subsequently dispersing his forces and acting without reserves. His cavalry consisted mainly of Don, Kuban and Terek Cossacks expelled from their villages for their involvement in Bolshevism, striving back to the villages, and from these regions outside of town. The riders were well trained, equipped and sat on good horses, mostly stolen from the Don. The red cavalry was afraid and avoided accepting mounted attacks. However, she was stubborn in pursuing the retreating enemy, but

quickly cooled down when she ran into resistance. I could have held out in Voronezh for a long time, but soon Liski, and then Usman-Sobakino, were taken by the Reds. I could be cut off and surrounded in Voronezh with the prospect of breaking through a hundred miles through the overwhelming masses of the enemy's cavalry. In view of this, on the night of October 10-11, I cleared Voronezh and crossed the Don. Having received several good "lessons", Budyonny did not dare to take the city, guarded only by posts and a few patrols, throughout the day on October 11. Only late in the evening did his vanguards enter the city. My posts moved, in turn, across the river, destroying th

My task now was to prevent Budyonny from passing through the Don, or, in any case, to prevent its spread on the right bank of the Don as long as possible. I thought that Budyonny would set himself the task of sweeping me away, and then, heading for Kharkov, bypassing the right wing of the Dobroarmiya stationed near Kursk. A blow to the Don was less likely, because the Dobrarmia, due to its advanced position, threatened the Bolsheviks more: on the other hand, it was much stronger morally than the mediocre and sluggish Don

parts.

During my stay in Voronezh, a number of meetings took place at which the workers spoke out for the need to actively help me. At the last moment, when Voronezh was already being shelled by red artillery, right at the rally at which my officer, Yesaul Sokolov spoke, a detachment of railway workers consisting of about 600 people came to me. I went out and addressed the workers with warm gratitude. At this time, a projectile that came from somewhere exploded in the air with a crack. Frightened and unaccustomed to such things, the workers shied away in different directions; some fell to the ground out of fear. A worker who was standing near me was wounded and fell, covered in blood. - Congratulations on your baptism of fire! I shouted, encouraging the workers. They recovered and, without

even going home, moved out of the city with songs. These workers were

poured into the 1st Rifle Battalion under the command of Colonel Rutson, later, at the request of the people, renamed the Wolf Shock Battalion. The workers became good soldiers and far surpassed many Cossacks in battles with their prowess. Big frost hit. The Cossacks and especially the arrows were poorly equipped; there were no gloves; shoes were in poor condition. Cases of

freezing limbs and colds have become more frequent. At the same time, the typhus epidemic intensified. Our ranks began to melt rapidly. Under the influence of rumors about a political thunderstorm that broke out in the Kuban, the demoralization of the Caucasian division was intensifying.

Regimental commanders reported daily that the Cossacks were deserting. Replenishments from the Kuban did not reach me, scattering along the way, or, taking advantage of the lack of administration in the rear, formed into gangs that robbed the population and sowed hatred for the troops. A new evil also appeared - the lack of horseshoes for reforging horses. During the sleet, our horses could only walk at a pace, while the horses of Budyonny's cavalry, forged for winter horseshoes, developed any gait. His detachments freely departed from our persecution; the Cossacks, at every failure, felt on their shoulders the enemy who had cut into the rear. This could not but demagnetize people's moods. In order to prevent Budyonny from crossing the Don, I watched the river with posts for 25 versts up and downstream. The posts were connected by telephone with the reserve, and rifle battalions were posted at the most important points. Skirmishes occurred daily, accompanied by the destruction of small enemy groups crossing here and there. Around October 17, north of the village of Grozdevka, as well as in the area of Rechitsa Budyonny, having gathered shock groups with strong artillery, he shot down my detachments and transferred cavalry to the brigade, under the cover of which he built bridges; soon a division of cavalry, reinforced by infantry, appeared on each of my flanks. There was an opportunity to be surrounded, because against Budyonny's three cavalry divisions (4th, 6th and Kuban Reds) I had only 2,500 sabers and 2,000 bayonets. It should be noted that the red cavalry divisions each consisted of three regimental brigades. The regiments were strong, 700-800 checkers each. Budyonny outnumbered me almost ten times in cavalry. Its infantry consisted of one division of nine regiments. The regiments, however, were weak, no more than 600 bayonets each. Poorly equipped and badly battered by us in many battles, they did not show much impulse. The Don command demanded that I retreat to join the Don army, and Mai-Maevsky demanded that I go to Kastornaya, thus covering the right flank of the Dobroarmiya. In case of disagreement with h

me Don parts. What would I be left with? With 600 checkers of the Caucasian division. In the end, the Commander-in-Chief ordered me to go to Kastornaya, with the preservation of the 4th Don Corps. Meanwhile, Kursk had already been surrendered by volunteers, and they retreated to the south. I had to retreat as slowly as possible so as not to bring Budyonny to the flank and rear of our army. Here I broke the record for the slowest retreat - 80 miles from Voronezh to Kastornaya, with a terrible inequality of forces, I went in three weeks. In carrying out this difficult task, two armored trains sent to me helped me a lot - "Glory to the officers" and "General Drozdovsky", which drove forward and smashed the red cavalry as soon as it got bolder. The armored car "Glory to the officers" acted especially heroically, which broke into one of the stations already occupied by the Reds, took the battery in full harness. The officers of his team mounted horses as mounts and brought this battery to us, following the train. I united all my infantry under the command of the valiant General Postovsky, a participant in the Mammoth raids. After being upset in three battles, the Red infantry acted very hesitantly and hid behind their cavalry. In Kastornaya, which I approached at the end of October and took up a position, a small - about 600 bayonets - but strong in spirit and staunch Markovsky regiment arrived at my place. They brought 3 tanks - 1 large and 2 small, as well as camp kitchens. Tanks, however, were of little use to me, for they were always repaired and deteriorated after each entry into the field. Budyonny carefully took care of his horse composition. After 2-3 days of action at the front, he withdrew units to the reserve, replacing them with fresh or infantry. But I, due to the limitations of my forces, and also due to the fact that the initiative was in the hands of the enemy, was always forced to keep my cavalry in the first line, discovering and tiring the already exhausted Cossacks and crippling my horse composition. After holding out for a week at Kastornaya, I was forced to move away from her, because due to the retreat of the volunteer units in contact with m

group with his right flank, risked being bypassed by Budyonny.

In pursuit of

Shkuro, at the Sukovkino station near Kastornaya Budyonny, he captured a white armored train "Glory to the officers." In Kastornaya they did not know that Sukovkino was in the hands of the Reds.

The armored train approached the platform. Budyonny and Oka Gorodovikov in cloaks met the commander of the armored train. The lieutenant reported: "Mr. General, the armored train "Glory to the Officers" has arrived at your disposal."

Budyonny invited him to the station building, where the lieutenant was arrested, and meanwhile the horsemen, who had taken refuge near the embankment, occupied the armored train. In

Kastornaya Budyonny captured 3,000 prisoners, 4 armored trains, 122 guns and 4 tanks. Tanks often broke down, and Shkuro complained that they were of little use. Of course, each of the memoirists, describing the same battle from the positions of the opposing sides, usually tries to correct the events in his favor. However, in general, Budyonny's memoirs look more fantastic than Shkuro's, although Andrei Grigoryevich, working in exile, had almost no documents with him. Therefore, in particular, many numbers of the Soviet divisions and even the armies with which he fought in the Voronezh region do not correspond to reality. Semyon Mikhailovich doubted in vain that Shkuro was really forced to transfer a significant part of his forces near Mariupol to fight the Makhno raid, which threatened Denikin's headquarters in Taganrog, and with the red-green rebels in the North Caucasus. This is evidenced not only by Shkuro himself, but also by the preserved correspondence of the Denikin Headquarters with the command of the Don Army, as well as with the commanders of the cavalry corps. Secondly, Shkuro admits that his corps, consisting of Kuban and Terek Cossacks, and especially the Don Cossack corps of Mamontov, had already undergone serious decay by the time they occupied Voronezh. The Cossacks tried to quickly get to their native villages with the loot, in fact, they deserted from the units under the pretext of "holidays". As a result, Budyonny received an almost threefold numerical superiority over the Whites and took the he

the corps was fresh, rested, reforged for winter horseshoes, while the mammoth and skinnners were tired of long campaigns and did not have time to reforge the horses. Also, the episode with the impudent letter allegedly handed over to Shkuro does not find any confirmation in the latter's memoirs. Therefore, the question of whether the letter of Budyonny Shkuro was really transmitted remained open - Dundich died. Although, I note, the episode with Dundich is already present in the third book of Alexei Tolstoy's trilogy "Walking through the torments", completed in 1941. So if the story of the visit of a brave Croat to Voronezh is a legend, then it arose no later than the 30s

years.

But in any case, Shkuro's story deserves much more credibility that he, having clearly insufficient strength, was not going to attack Budyonny first and went on the offensive only by order of the command of the Don Army, trying to break the red cavalry in parts. Shkuro notes that at the beginning of the battle, Budyonny did not act very skillfully, he did not beat with his fist, but with spread fingers. However, this tactic could also have its own deep meaning, being a kind of reconnaissance in battle, forcing Shkuro to use his reserves. But about the fact that the Budennovites allegedly could not withstand a collision with the White Cossacks in an open battle, Andrei Grigorievich was clearly cunning. Whatever one may say, the Red cavalrymen, and first of all the Budyonnovists, defeated the cavalry of the Denikin Armed Forces of the South of Russia, not only in the battles near Voronezh, but also in the later battles in the North Caucasus, including in the largest oncoming cavalry battle of the Civil War near the village of Yegorlykская . Why, then, did the Budennovskaya cavalry "fear and avoid accepting horse attacks," as Shkuro wrote? Not only Shkuro, but also other white authors confirm that near Voronezh Budyonny had a significant numerical superiority. According to Denikin, Budyonny's cavalry group, reinforced by the infantry division of the 8th Army, numbered 12-15 thousand. In turn, the 4th Don Corps of General Mamontov totaled three and a half thousand sabers by October 5, but even these

the forces were weakened by the diversion of part of them to support Liskinskaya, so that in the group of General Shkuro near Kastorna at one time only 1800 sabers of the 4th Don Corps remained. The 1st Caucasian Cossack division consisted of 600-700 checkers, not counting regimental machine-gun and other teams, and the 1st Terek Cossack division had about 1800 checkers (according to Shkuro's telegram). I note that the small number of white cavalry was associated primarily with the beginning of the process of

decomposition of the Caucasian units and their withdrawal from the front. Yegorov estimated the strength of the Budyonovsky corps by September 27 at 7450 checkers, 590 bayonets, 26 guns. This number does not include the 12th and 16th Rifle Divisions attached to the corps, the Separate Cavalry Brigade and the 12th Railway Brigade. Even in the memoirs of Budyonny and Shkuro, it is evident that Budyonny was in no hurry to advance on Voronezh and sought to protect his people. The commanders of the Civil War could not afford the luxury of heavy losses, as this threatened to undermine their authority and mass desertion. Interestingly, Budyonny tried to apply this principle in the Great Patriotic War, but rather quickly found himself out of work. Colonel of the Don Army F.I. Eliseev saw the following as the reason for the defeat of the Whites near Voronezh: "The most important thing in this tragedy was that General Mamantov was not at the front; General Shkuro returned to Voronezh only on October 5, when the first and unsuccessful phase of battles for the Cossacks had already broken out; and he did not have his right hand in operations, the chief of staff of the General Staff Corps, General Shifner-Markevich. From the very beginning, the corps acted without a single leadership and scattered. Here is a telegram from General Shkuro addressed to General Denikin: "As a soldier and a citizen, I report that I cannot resist the Cavalry Army of Budyonny. This army is concentrated among 15,000 sabers in the area of Gryazi - now it is conducting a fierce attack on our forces. I have at my disposal about 600 sabers of the Caucasian division, currently horseless, and 1,500 sabers of the remnants of Mamantov's corps. There

composition, but this division, on your orders, is taken away from me. She, at this time, is loaded into wagons at the Liski station to be sent to the Taganrog region, in order to destroy the Makhnovist gangs operating there. In view of the foregoing, I give the order to leave Voronezh tomorrow. General Shkuro. The number of Cavalry Shkuro, apparently, overstates. According to Yegorov, Budyonny, even taking into account the attached rifle divisions and the Separate Cavalry Brigade, could not

have had more than 10 thousand checkers. By order of the command of the Southern Front, the enemy armored train "General Shkuro", captured as a trophy, was named after Semyon Budyonny. Thus, Budyonny was placed among the main characters of the Civil War, which determined its outcome. The highest Bolshevik leaders now knew about him and, at least in public, expressed their respect to him. Although at the same time they retained some apprehension against the leader of the former Don partisans: no matter how he turned into a peasant leader, the new Pugachev, who, having dealt with the Whites, would then take on the Bolsheviks. As for the idea of some representatives of the white camp that the reason for the defeat of the white cavalry near Voronezh was the lack of a unified command, it hardly corresponds to the actual state of affairs. According to Shkuro's memoirs, Mamontov, who broke his leg, left for the Don region long before Budyonny approached Voronezh, so that the unity of command of the two corps, Don and Kuban, was ensured - both of them were subordinate to Shkuro. However, his troops had already thinned considerably from

desertion and decomposed, having been able to plunder with impunity. The very idea of Shkuro to unite all the Cossack units and move them to Moscow was not feasible at that moment. Under the terms of the fighting, it was impossible to withdraw sufficient forces from the front for a raid on Moscow, where a large number of Soviet troops were concentrated. In addition, in the state in which the Cossack cavalry was in the late autumn of 1919, it was already incapable of great accomplishments. The actual

repressions against its leaders especially strongly demoralized the Kuban Cossacks. In addition, the ranks of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia were mowed down by typhus, and the sanitary service there was worse than even in the Red Army, which also did not represent a model in this regard. As a result of the victory near Voronezh, Budyonny's corps went into the flank of the White strike group fighting at Orel and Krom. The picture of the disintegration of the Armed Forces of the South of Russia that began in those days is well drawn by the white memoirist G. N. Rakovsky: November 1919 in Kharkov, at the headquarters of the Volunteer Army, led by General May-Maevsky. The meeting, which took place under the chairmanship of Denikin, was attended by: the chief of staff of the commander-in-chief, General Romanovsky, Mai-Maevsky with his chief of staff Efimov, the commander of the Don Army Sidorin, quartermaster general Kislov and others. The train of the commander-in-chief, traveling to Kharkov from Taganrog, was two hours late, and at that time Mai-Maevsky with the ranks of the headquarters were waiting for General Denikin at the Kharkov station. Usually very noisy and cheerful, this time the headquarters struck those who did not belong to its composition with general confusion, anxiety and anxiety, which were written on their faces. To the question of one of the participants in the meeting, what is the situation at the front, Mai Mayevsky replied: - Wow: satisfactory. But here, at the station, after this answer, an officer of the General Staff approached him and began to quietly report something. It was evident from the faces of Mai-Maevsky and those around him that the news received was very serious. Indeed, during these hours the Volunteer Army left Kursk. When the commander-in-chief arrived and everyone arrived at the headquarters, Denikin first turned to Mai-Maevsky with the order to report on the situation at the front. Everyone went to

operational department. It turned out that there was no map. Mai-Maevsky said that the map was at the station, where, according to his assumptions, the meeting was to take place. The participants of the meeting waited more than an hour until the map was brought, since in fact there was only one card for the headquarters, for the commander, for the entire operational department, which everyone used. This small but very characteristic detail made a very painful impression on the conference participants. They waited a long time for the cards ... Denikin was already beginning to resent the delay. After an hour of waiting, he ordered General Romanovsky to illuminate the general situation. Sidorin and Kislov spoke about the situation on the Don Front. After that, Denikin offered to cover in more detail the situation on the front of the Volunteer Army, the quartermaster general of the headquarters of this army, Colonel Goerts, from whose report it immediately became clear how little the headquarters was aware of the situation at the front, about the location of units, even approximate. When the calculation of enemy forces began on the basis of information obtained by intelligence, the ranks of the headquarters of the Volunteer Army revealed their complete ignorance of who was fighting in front of them and in what numbers. One conclusion could be drawn from this report: the front of the Volunteer Army was shot down and was withdrawing in complete disorder, because it could not otherwise be assumed that no one knew the whereabouts of many units, although the conditions of communication due to the well-developed railway network were very satisfactory. Subsequently, the meeting discussed a number of different strategic issues. From the report of May-Maevsky and the assessment of the situation before the participants in the meeting, it definitely became clear that the Volunteer Army was in a terribly upset state, that there were no reserves. The last replenishment of 700-800 people was sent to the front on the day of the meeting, and there were no more replenishments in November. It turned out with complete clarity that a system of spare parts had not been created on the territory of the Volunteer Army. Nor was an

At the meeting, a combat plan was worked out, and it was proposed to single out a large cavalry group approximately in the Valuyek area and subordinate it to General Mamontov. By the way, during the meeting, Denikin and Mai-Maevsky exchanged a number of remarks, from which it was clear that the commander-in-chief was very excited about the civil activities of Mai-Maevsky as the commander-in-chief of the territory of the Volunteer Army and spoke with the greatest indignation about the activities of the Yekaterinoslav governor Shchetinin. May-Maevsky reported that he had already been removed by him. In Kharkov, during his conversation with Denikin and Romanovsky, the commander of the Don Army, Sidorin, by the way, raised the question of the events in the Kuban, which were still known from the order of the commander in chief to bring the chairman and members of the Parisian delegation of the Kuban Regional Rada, headed by Bych for treason against Russia, allegedly expressed in the conclusion of a special independent agreement with the allied "Mountain Government". Sidorin was also concerned about the inclusion of the Kuban in the rear area of the Caucasian Army and the appointment of General Wrangel and General Pokrovsky to eliminate the Kuban complications. Addressing Denikin, Sidorin stated that he was very worried about the outcome of events taking place in the Kuban, and thought that it was necessary to act very carefully there. Otherwise, very serious complications can be expected, and this worries him much more than the difficult situation of the front. "There is nothing serious there, and no complications that you fear will happen there," Romanovsky reassured Sidorin. - I am very afraid, - said the commander of the Don Army, - that every careless step taken now will serve to the collapse of the Kuban units at the front.

The Commander-in-Chief stopped this conversation and said in

conclusion:

- Wrangel will finally cut this knot. One or the other... A final resolution of the matter is urgently needed. On

Kuban has developed an unbearably heavy atmosphere. Living together the way we lived is no longer possible. The Commander-in-Chief's train left Kharkov in the morning, since at night one could fear an attack on it by the Makhnovist gangs wandering in the Kharkov region. The military atmosphere thickened every day, rear devastation grew, speculation took on the character of a public disaster, theft and embezzlement reached grandiose proportions. All this was joined by epidemic diseases, and in particular the epidemic of typhus, from which the Armed Forces in the South of Russia were literally melting by leaps and bounds. I remember, for example, how trains with dead bodies of typhus patients were brought to Millerovo (Kaledinsk) station, where I was in October 1919, from the previous Chertkovo station, who were dying from cold, from lack of care, from a hunger strike, from a lack of primitive amenities. . From the trains, dozens of corpses were loaded onto large carts, the owners of which, perched on these wagons, drove off to the cemetery, where they dumped their terrible load into

common graves. But all this could be observed at other stations ... An epidemic of typhus raged throughout the south of Russia. And it was often possible to see at the same stations the station buildings, gazebos in the station gardens, overflowing with the corpses of typhoid fever, stacked like firewood, in high piles. Mortality reigned colossal... The center of the Volunteer Army - the city of Kharkov - was already on the eve of the fall. Kharkov refugees had already overflowed Rostov and were moving to Ekaterinodar. Disappointment and pessimism began to gradually take hold of broad social and political circles, responsible representatives of the military and civil authorities. Already in the lower classes they stubbornly talked about the fact that soon "ours will come" to both Rostov and Yekaterinodar. General enthusiasm gave way to discouragement at the sight of material and moral decay. The authority and prestige of the Volunteer Army, headquarters and members of the "Special Conference"

Despite the difficult situation that arose in October and November 1919, the mood of the Cossack military leaders in the Don Army was distinguished by cheerful optimism and a firm belief that the trials they were experiencing were only temporary. The main reason for such optimism was the mood of the ordinary Cossack masses. During my stay on the Don Front during this period, I met and talked with a very large number of people, from the commander of the Don Army to ordinary Cossacks. They complained about endless fatigue, about devastation, about an epidemic, about political and other mistakes, and cursed the rear with incredible bitterness. But not a single person pointed to the possibility of any kind of agreement with the Bolsheviks. Everyone stood on the fact that you need to fight to the end. Even when it definitely became clear that the Cossacks could not hold out on the Don, the Don people with their wives and children, with cattle and all their property moved south, declaring: "Let's go with the whole Don to the Kuban, the Caucasus, Persia, Turkey, anywhere, but let's not stay with the Bolsheviks. And so they did." This time, the Cossacks, taught by the bitter experience of decossackization, did not hope for a peaceful compromise with the Bolsheviks. However, in fact, the front was becoming more and more exposed, since many were in a hurry to take the loot to the rear, without thinking about

sad consequences.

Wrangel commented on the defeat of the white cavalry near Voronezh: "The front of the army of General Mai-Maevsky rolled back 20-30 miles daily. The fighting went on near Kharkov itself. The cavalry of "comrade" Budyonny, pushing the cavalry units of General Mamontov, quickly moved south, cutting through the volunteer and Don units. The solution I proposed a month ago was already belated. I clearly realized that it was impossible to count on success under these conditions, and I asked myself whether I had the right to take on an overwhelming task, knowing in advance that I was not able to solve it and justify the hopes placed on me ... "

Chapter

Three THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST HORSE

On November 17, 1919, after the victory near Voronezh, Budyonny's cavalry corps was transformed into the First Cavalry Army. Regarding this event, Trotsky in his last book "Stalin" stated: "In the anniversary article of 1930, the name of Stalin is mentioned for the first time, moreover, not in connection with the construction of the army as a whole, but only the First Cavalry Army, which was really formed in Tsaritsyn with the participation of Stalin. S. Orlovsky in the article "Voroshilov in the Cavalry Army" writes: "The creation of the cavalry army by Stalin in this period of the civil war played a big role. "It was," writes Voroshilov, "the first experience of joining cavalry divisions into such a large formation as an army. Stalin saw the power of the cavalry masses in a civil war. He specifically understood their enormous importance for a crushing maneuver. But in the past, no one had such a kind of experience, like the action of cavalry armies. It was not written about this in scientific works, and therefore such an event caused either bewilderment or direct resistance.

Trotsky especially objected. "Whether to unite the two corps and the rifle brigade into a special cavalry army, or to leave these three units at the disposal of the front command, this question had nothing to do with a general assessment or underestimation of the importance of the cavalry. The most important criterion was the question of command: will Budyonny cope with such a mass of horsemen? Will he be able to rise from tactical tasks to strategic ones? With an outstanding front commander who knows and understands the cavalry, and with reliable means of communication, the creation of a special cavalry army would be wrong, since excessive massing of the cavalry always threatens to weaken its main advantage: mobility. The disagreement on this issue was episodic, and if history were to repeat itself, I would repeat my doubts again. In principle, Lev Davydovich was right. An increase in the number of cavalry formations led to an increase in convoys, traffic jams and, as a result, to a decrease in the speed of movement of cavalry units. Namely, speed was the main advantage of the cavalry in the Civil War. Looking ahead, I note that there was

it was abandoned both because of supply difficulties and because of the great vulnerability of the cavalry masses from the air. However, then, in 1919, the creation of the Cavalry was not so much strategic (well, what a strategist from Budyonny!), As political. From that moment on, the status of Budyonny and Voroshilov increased significantly. In the person of the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry, Stalin received a serious means of combating the objectionable commander of the front, when the obedient Yegorov was replaced by the obstinate Shorin. The cavalry corps is an obedient tool in the hands of the front commander. And the command of the Cavalry, the most powerful strike force of the front, is already a value almost equal in size to the command, it can directly appeal to Trotsky, and to Lenin, and to Stalin. For example, the same V. I. Shorin was removed from the post of commander of the Caucasian Front with the active participation of Voroshilov and Budyonny. On December 5, 1919, the commander of the Southern Front, A. I. Yegorov, and a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front, I. V. Stalin, arrived at the headquarters of the First Cavalry Army, which was then just being created. They also brought K. E. Voroshilov and E. A. Shchadenko, appointed members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army, with whom S. M. Budyonny had been familiar for a long time. On December 6, the first meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry Army and the command of the Southern Front took place in Veliko-Mikhailovka. Stalin read out an order to the troops of the Southern Front on the renaming of the 1st Cavalry Corps into the Cavalry Army of the RSFSR. Yegorov emphasized that the main task of the First Cavalry was to defeat Denikin. It is necessary to separate the Don and Volunteer armies of the whites with a swift blow through the Donbass and, in cooperation with the 8th and 13th armies, defeat the parts.

By that time, Shkuro was forced to retreat from Voronezh to Kastornaya, and after a week of fighting he left this important railway station as well. He sought to convince the headquarters of the Volunteer Army that "Budyonny's cavalry poses an inevitable danger to us; proved the need, without wasting time, to exert all efforts to put an end to him, even if for this it would be necessary to divert troops from

other sectors of the front and give up the territory up to Rostov. But Denikin no longer had the strength to end the Cavalry. To accomplish the task, artillery, a detachment of armored trains, an aviation group and an armored detachment were added to the troops available at Budyonny, and they also decided to significantly increase the number of fighters, which at that time was about seven thousand. In principle, the Cavalry then did not much exceed the Russian cavalry division of the First World War in terms of numbers, but soon its composition tripled. On the same day, December 5, Iosif Vissarionovich energetically set about resolving the issue of Budyonny's membership in the RCP (b). Stalin, Shchadenko and Voroshilov gave him recommendations, and after learning that the newly-made army commander applied for admission back in the spring, Stalin offered to consider him a member of the RCP (b) from March 1919. Thus, the "comrades from the center" wanted to guarantee the political reliability of Semyon Mikhailovich.

After party affairs were over, Stalin announced that for the successful command and for the defeat of the cavalry of Mamontov and Shkuro, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR, by a decree of November 24, 1919, awarded Budyonny with a golden military weapon (saber) with the Order of the Red Banner on it, and the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front - a golden cigarette case. The cigarette case was handed over to Budyonny here, at a meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council, and a golden saber with an order - the next day in the morning before the formation of fighters and commanders of a special reserve division. Taking the saber, Semyon Mikhailovich kissed it

and swore "to serve the cause of our revolution until the last beat of his heart." Pursuing the retreating Don Army, the Cavalry occupied Rostov-on-Don on the night of January 8-9, 1920. This is how Budyonny described it in his memoirs: "On the evening of January 8, the 4th Cavalry Division occupied Nakhichevan, and the 6th Cavalry Division broke into Rostov. Considering the defense on the approaches to Rostov an impenetrable shield, the White Guard command did not prepare defensive lines directly on the outskirts and in the center of the city. Therefore, the 6th Cavalry Division broke into Rostov completely unhindered. The appearance on the streets of R

for the whites, who were calmly celebrating the Christmas holiday that night: after all, Denikin's command had just announced that the Reds had been thrown back a hundred kilometers

from Rostov. Here are some pictures of life in Rostov on the night of January 8-9. The tram rides a group of white officers. They are tipsy, telling jokes. Suddenly, our fighters jump on the steps of the carriages and throw the officers out of the tram ...

- What's the matter ?! What a cheek! officers are outraged. One of them tries to hit our fighter in the face with a glove, but others already guess that they are dealing with the Reds, and raise their hands up ...

In the hall of

a rich mansion, ladies and officers, bowing stiffly, dance

a mazurka, not suspecting that next to them in the dining room

for the cavalrymen are already at the set table. In another mansion,

the horsemen find the officers at a festive meal. The officers fight back with what they can: some with weapons, some with bottles and plates.

In the Palace Hotel,

several generals, trying to get away from our fighters, huddle

into the elevator car. "You can't go here, gentlemen officers

live here," was the answer of the owners of the houses to the

tenants of the 6th Cavalry Division. In one house, the hostess did not

let the commander of the 34th regiment of this division, declaring

that her house was occupied by Mr. General. Indeed,

the commander of the 34th regiment found Denikin's general

in this house, comfortably seated on a sofa in the company of his

young officers. The commander of the

2nd brigade of the 6th division reported that he had captured

the White Guard armored train, which was in a "completely

peaceful mood." The commander of the 1st brigade of the same

division, Book, reported that the soldiers of his brigade "quietly

removed the guards from the railway

bridge." As early as the morning of January 9, nimble as sparrows,

Rostov boys tried to get away with yesterday's issues of the White

Guard newspapers, where, under the heading "Messages from the

Front," the honorable gentlemen were informed

about the victories of the Whites north of Rostov. On this day, street

battles broke out in the city with the White Guard units driven out by the 4th division f

also with various wandering divisions. With the help of Lewandovsky's 33rd Infantry Division, which entered Rostov by the morning of January 9, the resistance of the Whites was suppressed, and on January 10 there were no enemy troops left in the city. On January 11, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry sent the following report to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Southern Front and V. I. Lenin: "On January 8, 1920, the cities of Rostov and Nakhichevan were taken by the Red Cavalry Army at 20 o'clock. More than 10,000 white soldiers, 9 tanks, 32 guns, about 200 machine guns, many rifles and a colossal convoy were captured. All these trophies were taken as a result of bloody battles. The enemy was so defeated that our entry into the cities was not even noticed by the enemy and we liquidated all kinds of White headquarters and military establishments all night from January 8 to January 9. On the morning of January 9, a street battle began in Rostov and Nakhichevan, which lasted all day. On January 10, the cities were completely cleared and the enemy was driven back beyond Bataysk and Gniloaksayskaya. Only terrible fogs and rains prevented the enemy from pursuing and gave him the opportunity to destroy small crossings across the Koisug River near Bataysk and across the Don River near Aksayskaya. Don and the railway bridge in Rostov are intact. In Rostov, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry formed the Revolutionary Committee and appointed the chief of the garrison and the commandant. In the city there are a lot of different quartermaster and other warehouses, overflowing with all sorts of property. Everything is accounted for and protected. Today, January 11, there was a review of two cavalry divisions, where many workers of Rostov and Nakhichevan were present, led by an underground organization of communists. Greetings were proclaimed to the Red Army, the Soviet Republic and the leaders of the Communist Revolution. The Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry, on behalf of the Cavalry, congratulates you on the glorious victory and wholeheartedly proclaims a thunderous "cheers" for our leaders. Long live the great Red Army! Long live the final

Long live Soviet world power!" Semyon Mikhailovich modestly kept silent that the cavalrymen had pretty much plundered the city, that they were extracting from the mansions not only white officers and generals (whose fate, as a rule, was deplorable), but also everything that lay badly. And it was by no means fog and rain that prevented the rapid pursuit of the retreating whites in disorder, but the fact that Budyonny's soldiers were too carried away by tasting Rostov's wine stocks. In this regard, Lenin himself expressed his concern in a telegram about the "complete decomposition at Budyonny." and the executions of marauders, it was possible to restore order relatively quickly. During the battles near Bataysk, the representative of the Cheka, Jan Peters, telegraphs to Moscow: "Budyonny's army is decomposing every day: robberies, drunkenness, presence of suspicious women in the headquarters, there were cases of murder of the most conscious comrades Budyonny ceases to reckon with anyone. The atrocities he commits on the railway are absolutely incredible: continuous seizures of fuel, steam locomotives, wagons, emergency trains, plunder of trophy property. Each section is followed by a tail of wagons filled with women and loot." The commander of the South-Eastern Front, V. I. Shorin, and a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Front, V. A. Trifonov, reported to the commander-in-chief S. S. Kamenev: "The presence of troops in Rostov, Nakhichevan and Novocherkassk and large stations with large stocks of wine played a big role in terms of combat effectiveness troops. This was especially reflected in the Cavalry Army, where the majority indulged in drunkenness, robbery and violence in the cities of Rostov and Nakhichevan (meaning the Armenian-populated Nakhichevan-on-Don, now part of Rostov. - B.S.) . The thaw that came at that time and the appearance of water on the surface of the ice gave the troops, as it were, a legitimate reason for dooming themselves to inaction and marking time. He wrote about the same to Lenin and Sergo Ordzhonikidze: "I must say that the Cavalry, after taking Rostov

informed the front command that from the decayed Cavalry "one can expect a lot of trouble." A well-known journalist of that time A. Vetlugin wrote about the commander and his poorly controlled army: popular because he is insane in attacks, generous in robberies, indulgent with thugs. V. I. Shorin concluded that when attacking the Batai positions, "failure occurred, firstly, because they missed the moment - they stood still for 12 days, which allowed the enemy to organize, secondly, insufficiently coordinated actions and insufficient preparedness ... The enemy's forces are not so great, but they took advantage of the indecisiveness of our parts and act, as they say, with a bang. In a conversation over a direct wire, Shorin asked Sokolnikov: "Tell me, well, in the Cavalry Army, the final collapse and not

there is hope for the restoration of discipline, and can you say what caused this collapse, drunkenness or other reasons? Sokolnikov honestly answered that the area between Rostov and Bataysk was inconvenient for cavalry operations, while recognizing that the whites acted more decisively than the cavalry. Also, according to Grigory Yakovlevich, success was greatly hindered ... by Rostov himself, who "further increases the force that pulls the attackers back." Sokolnikov also proposed a new plan that was supposed to ensure the defeat of Denikin: "The capture of the Bataysk region by frontal attacks or even close coverage in the current situation and in the current state of the Don Valley will either fail or will cost huge sacrifices. It seems to me that a large-scale detour is needed." Budyonny and Voroshilov were busy with the same thing. In the winter of 1920, the Volunteer and Don armies fortified themselves on the Manych and on the Don in the Bataysk region and stopped the advance of the Reds. Cavalry in frontal attacks on foot suffered heavy losses. Budyonny proposed to bypass the fortifications near Bataysk through the ferry near the village of Konstantinovskaya and strike at the rear of the whites. But the commander of the Caucasian Front, Shorin, did not agree with him. January 23, 1920 Budyonny sent

telegram to Stalin and Trotsky: "If we continue to try to capture Bataysk from Rostov, Nakhichevan, it is our moral duty to warn you that we will finally destroy the best cavalry of the republic and risk very

many..."

On the same day, Budyonny, Voroshilov and Shchadenko sent a telegram to Trotsky and Stalin protesting against Shorin's accusations that the Cavalry "drowned its military glory in the Rostov wine cellars." The commander of the Caucasian fronts was given full responsibility for the fact that "the Cavalry was sinking and dying in the Batai swamps," and they asked that Shorin's order to continue the attacks be canceled "so as not to destroy the Cavalry and not to eliminate the successes achieved by the Red Army in this direction." On

January 24, Shorin met in Rostov-on-Don with the leadership of the Cavalry and the 8th Army, confirming his order to continue the attack on Bataysk. Then the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry again sent a telegram to the Council of Workers' and Peasants' Defense to Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin, arguing that Shorin "brought the Cavalry Army to the brink of death" and demanding his resignation. Lenin telegraphs RVS representatives Smilga and Ordzhonikidze: "Extremely concerned about the state of our troops on the Caucasian front, the complete disintegration at Budyonny, the weakening of all our troops, the weakness of the overall command, the strife between the armies, the strengthening of the enemy. It is necessary to strain all forces and carry out a series of emergency

measures with revolutionary energy. As early as January 5, 1920, Lenin sent the following

telegram to Ordzhonikidze: "Secret. Revolutionary Military Council 14, member of the PBC Comrade Ordzhonikidze. T. Sergo! I received a message that you + Commander 14 were drinking and walking with women for a week. Formal paper ... Scandal and shame! And I

praised you right and left !! And it was reported to Trotsky... Answer immediately: 1) Wh

2) How long have you been drinking in RVS 14? Who else did you drink and hang

out with? 3) The same - women? 4) Can you honestly promise to stop or (if you cannot) where to transfer you? For we cannot let you drink. 5) Commander 14 is a drunkard?

Incorrigible? Reply immediately. Let's give you a rest. But you have to pull up. It is forbidden. You are setting a bad example.

Hello! Your Lenin. Ordzhonikidze went to Rostov to calm drunkenness in the First Cavalry (obviously, Ilyich acted on the principle of "treating like from like"). And his drinking buddy Ieronim Uborevich instead of the 14th army now led the 9th, whose commander

Stepin died of typhus. On February 1, 1920, Budyonny sent a personal letter to Lenin, in which he again insisted on recalling Shorin, arguing that his "criminal" actions only play into the hands of the whites. As a result, Shorin was nevertheless removed from the post of commander of the front, but with a promotion, he was appointed assistant commander of all the armed forces of the republic. And in April 1920, Vasily Ivanovich was even awarded the Honorary Revolutionary Weapon with the Order of the Red Banner.

Instead of Shorin, Mikhail Tukhachevsky was appointed to command the Caucasian Front, with whom Budyonny and Voroshilov quickly found a common language. The discord between them began later, during a campaign in Poland, and it ended with Voroshilov in 1937 sanctioning the massacre of Tukhachevsky, and Budyonny was among those who pronounced a predetermined death sentence on the marshal. As a result, White launched a counterattack and recaptured Rostov.

On February 3, the day Tukhachevsky arrived at the front, Budyonny informed Stalin: "It's not safe at the front. Today they were going to hand over Novocherkassk. If you or someone equal to you do not come to Rostov, a catastrophe will happen here." Stalin replied: "I achieved the resignation of Shorin and the appointment of a new commander Tukhachevsky - the conqueror of Siberia and the winner of Kolchak. Ordzhonikidze has been appointed to the Revolutionary Council of your front, who treats the Cavalry very well. Stalin fussed about appointing Tukhachevsky as commander of the front, and h

front headquarters and commander of the neighboring 8th Army G. Ya.

Sokolnikov. On February 9, the new commander of the Caucasian Front, Tukhachevsky, threw the Cavalry around Tikhoretskaya, as Budyonny had suggested, to strike at the junction of the Don and Kuban armies of the whites. By the way, Tukhachevsky at that time spoke very warmly about Budyonny and his Cavalry: "In operational terms, Budyonny, except for Uborevich, is the most capable commander and the most disciplined ... Personally, Budyonny is disciplined ... of course, simple as a non-commissioned officer. Here is my opinion about Budyonny. I believe that we in Russia will never have a cavalry equal to the Cavalry in courage and ability to act exclusively on horseback. In 1921, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic gave Budyonny a no less laudatory certification: "A born cavalry commander. Possesses operational-combat intuition. He loves and knows the cavalry business well ... In the position of commander of the Cavalry, he is indispensable. Tukhachevsky, agreeing with Budyonny's arguments about the need for a deeper bypass of the enemy, at the same time reported to Kamenev that "Budyonny cannot be made to feel that he will be able to recall persons he does not want from the front," even if Sokolnikov really has to be replaced as commander of 8th army. As a result, Sokolnikov remained in his post. Tukhachevsky, on the other hand, threw the Cavalry into a raid on Tikhoretskaya, and on February 29 the Reds captured Olginskaya. White memoirist G. N. Rakovsky described further events as follows: "From January 5, on the initiative of the Bolsheviks, fierce oncoming battles began. Donets and volunteers went on the counterattack on January 6 and won the battle. On January 7, they again repelled an attempt by the Reds to go on the offensive. Everyone cheered up. In this regard, the "commander-in-chief" Budyonny gave a very characteristic order, in which he said that his army was the beauty and pride of the red troops. But that was before Rostov. When the army came to Rostov, then in this "den of bourgeois depravity and abomination" the appearance of the army changed dramatically. Budyonny brought t

However, he refused to go on the offensive in this place and began to transfer his units from the Batai direction in order to strike, together with Dumenko, on the right flank of the Don army. Commanders took precautions in advance. On January 14, the Bolsheviks, with concentrated forces

along the entire front, went on the offensive, trying with the cavalry of Budyonny and Dumenko to strike at the right flank of the Don Army from the side of the Vesely farm. But as a result, on January 15, Dumenko, and on January 16, Budyonny suffered severe damage. As a result, some guns were captured about forty. The Volunteer Corps also had a major success, capturing a lot of booty. The commander of the cavalry group, General A.V. Golubintsev, recalled the same battles: "Without a decisive result, but with some superiority in our direction, the group fought in the area of Sadkovsky and Wet Olkhovka with units of the Budyonny army. At the village of Mokraya Olkhovka, when our patrols collided with the Reds, two Cossacks of the 14th brigade were captured by Budyonny, but the next day they managed to escape to their units. When questioning these Cossacks at the headquarters, they told the following. When they were brought to Budyonny, he was having lunch at that time and wished to interview the prisoners himself. After asking which unit and asking a few more questions that the Cossacks could not or did not want to answer, Budyonny cursed them with bad abuse, half-severely, half-good-naturedly: - Oh, you Golubintsev whores! Want to eat? The Cossacks, shifting from foot to foot, answered: "That's right, comrade, wish."

- Sit down! - And, seating them at the table with him, he tried to get some information from them.

According to the story of these same Cossacks, who once served in the 3rd Don Cossack Regiment of the Imperial Army, Budyonny's chief of staff was Ensign Zotov, a former sergeant major of the 1st hundred of the 3rd Don Cossack Regiment. I remember this Zotov very well. The man is already elderly and was once a efficient and strict sergeant major. At the end of the war, he was sent by a regiment to one of the ensign schools. He got to the Reds, apparently by accident, since he was in the regiment

conscientious and zealous servant, during the revolution he behaved impeccably. At the beginning of January 1918, while in Novochoerkassk, I unexpectedly met him at the officers' meeting. Hello Zotov! - I wish you good health, Colonel. –

What are you doing here, in Novochoerkassk?

- Yes, Mr. Colonel, I finished school and I'm going home on vacation. - And then where? - I can't know where I would like to join the cavalry regiment, I'm afraid that I won't get into the infantry. - Come to me, to our third regiment, to Glazunovka, I will be glad to see you.

"I humbly thank you, Mr. Colonel, I consider it an honor and happiness to serve in my native regiment, I will certainly come." This is where our conversation ended. Obviously, upon arrival at his village, he ended up with the Reds, stayed there and, as if by inertia, made a career, graduated from the Red Military Academy in St. Petersburg and subsequently was the commander of the 3rd Cavalry Corps. I accidentally learned this last information in the 1920s, already in exile, from the Soviet magazine Ogonyok, where among the portraits of red "generals" who graduated from the military academy, there was a portrait of Zotov with the inscription: "S. A. Zotov, commander of the 3rd cavalry corps, former head of the field headquarters of Budyonny. It is characteristic that the chief of the field headquarters of the Red Army in his career in the tsarist army did not go far from Budyonny. Stepan Andreevich Zotov, a cornet from the regular sergeants, graduated from the ensign school in the revolutionary year of 1917. Semyon Mikhailovich did not like gold-chasing officers very much. The officers who were in the Cavalry were mainly cornets and warrant officers from the sergeants and non-commissioned officers (sergeants), who were not strangers to ordinary Red Army soldiers. Yes, and Budyonny himself did not feel in relation to them feelings of his own military inferiority.

On the other hand, this circumstance refutes the legend that Budyonny was commanded by regular tsarist officers who were in his headquarters. A certain number of Cossack officers entered the Cavalry only in the spring of 1920, after the capture of Novorossiysk by the Reds and the surrender of most of the Don Army, as well as the Kuban formations. No, Budyonny then at the very least had to plan all his operations, but he had to plan himself. Further, according to Golubintsev, the events unfolded as follows: "In the last days of January, a Red Army soldier carrying a report mistakenly got to our outpost. The report was sent by the head of the 28th Soviet Division, Comrade Azin, to the neighboring Red Detachment, if I am not mistaken, Kikvidze, with the message that the 1st Cavalry Army of Budyonny had passed along the left bank of the Manych to the Torgovaya station. I immediately forwarded this report to the headquarters of the corps, but they did not attach any importance to it and did not believe it, since the headquarters did not yet have information about the existence of a cavalry army!

After 10 days, this army showed itself at Shablievka. By January 30, Budyonny's army concentrated in the Torgovaya area. And here is what Golubintsev tells about the defeat of the 28th Iron Rifle Division of the legendary commander Vladimir Martynovich Azin (Azinsha): 500 to the winter quarters. At this signal, our units simultaneously and swiftly attacked the stunned enemy in mounted formation. The Reds were covered over like a flock of petrified partridges. The nervous clatter of guns that flared up and the instinctive attempt to resist was quickly suppressed. A few saber blows - and the enemy is completely crushed. All 12 machine guns, ready for firing, were captured in position. The head of the division, Comrade Azin, himself tried to ride away, but thanks to the deep snow, his horse stumbled, got stuck, and the red "general" was captured alive, almost like Kosciuszko. In addition, about a hundred prisoners were taken and the same number were hacked to death. Our losses: the centurion Krasnoglazov and seven Cossacks -

all are slightly

injured. Since I had reason to believe that the winter hut Popov was occupied by the red cavalry, I decided to personally verify this with Azin by questioning. Azin, who had shot a captured officer of the 14th brigade the day before, was terribly worried for fear of retribution. "You will shoot me, general!" Azin shouted nervously, clutching his head in horror.

- It depends on you. If you directly and frankly answer my questions, I will not shoot you, but send you to the rear, where, I believe, you will not be shot either. I give you five minutes to think: my units are ready to attack Popov's farm. Tell me, who is busy with the Popov farm? Is there cavalry there? Give me your word that you won't shoot me! I promise if your information is true.

Azin apparently hesitated. I glanced at my watch. - There are two minutes left, the cavalry will now begin an attack on the Popov farm. You run the risk of being late with advice, Mr. Azin, calmly

I noticed.

- There is only one company and convoys. The cavalry and two battalions left an hour ago," Azin shouted quickly. In 10 minutes Popov's winter hut was occupied by us, wagon trains and several dozen prisoners were captured. I sent Azin to the headquarters of the corps, and from there he was sent to the headquarters of the Don Army, where, as I later learned, he enjoyed the special disposition and attention of General Sidorin. I

don't know about the further fate of Azin, but I was told that in the Novorossiysk region, Azin made an attempt to escape to the Reds, but was shot dead during the flight somewhere between the carriages by the Cossacks of the headquarters guard. Of course, Golubintsev could add something about Azin's behavior at the time of his capture. But his story, in principle, is in good agreement with the fact that the whites widely distributed an appeal signed by Azin (and his signature was well known in the Soviet headquarters), in which he called on the Red Army to surrender. Azin's body was never found, and how exactly he died is still unknown.

And here is what Golubintsev says about the defeat of General Pavlov's group: "A number of gross mistakes, confusion, or rather lack of confidence in their abilities, if not unpreparedness, of part of the highest command staff to conduct an operation in those exceptional conditions of the Civil War can only explain those terrible mistakes bordering on crime, thanks to which the Don cavalry, having all the data to destroy Budyonny's cavalry group, not only failed to fulfill its task, but was completely upset, disheveled and lost its heart just at that fatal moment when the fate of not only the Civil war, but also Russia. I will try, as far as my memory allows, to describe those events in which I was a direct participant or which took place before my eyes. I'll start with the unfortunate February 4, 1920, when General Pavlov, after successful operations on February 1–3 against Gai's cavalry division, while in the area of the Veseloye farm, ordered an attack on Torgovaya to destroy the Budyonny group. In severe frost, about 26 degrees Réaumur, General Pavlov's cavalry group was ordered to go straight, without roads, by compass, along the steppe, covered with a thick layer of snow more than a yard deep, in the direction of Torgovaya. For about 30 versts there was not a single settlement, and meanwhile, a few versts to the left, along the valley of the Manych River, there was a road parallel to our direction through a densely populated area, through which the 1st Cavalry Army of Budyonny passed a few days ago. According to the order, parts of the group of General Pavlov were to pass the line of the Maly Yegorlyk River at 12 noon on February 4. How to explain the decision of General Pavlov, an old, experienced, combat cavalry commander, to go straight and wage war on nature, condemning his cavalry to death? It was said that General Pavlov was against such a decision, but the order of the commander of the Don Army, General Sidorin, was categorical in this sense.

Another cavalry group, smaller in number, General Golubintsev, consisting of 4 cavalry regiments, 2 batteries and the Kuban cavalry division, located at Popov's winter quarters in the area of Tselina station, was ordered to become subordinate to General Pavlov and, speaking at 12 o'clock, move along the river Middle Yegorlyk in such a way that the next day, February 5, in the morning, together with the cavalry group of General Pavlov, attack Torgovaya from the southwest. Judging by the disposition, at dawn on February 5, the 1st and 2nd Kuban corps were supposed to approach from the southeast and from the south and simultaneously attack Torgovaya with us. Thus, the plan was conceived and worked out superbly: in theory, it turned out to be a complete encirclement by the superior forces of the enemy, who was in Torgovaya. But the execution of the plan was carried out in such a way that instead

of success, the defeat of their own forces turned out. The 1st and 2nd Kuban corps did not approach, and as it turned out later, they had been battered the day before by Dumenko's red cavalry. The group of General Pavlov, during a 30-verst march across the steppe without roads, was completely frostbitten and, having lost about 5 thousand people out of 12 thousand frostbitten and frozen, attacked at night in a mess of the Reds in the area of Torgovaya near the Shablievka station on their own and, not having time to use surprise and initial success, withdrew to the

Yegorlytskaya area, without even informing General Golubintsev of her departure. The group of General Golubintsev, having made a transition along the valley of the Sredniy Yegorlyk River, through an area dotted with farms and winter quarters, with stops and halts, and yet having lost 286 people frostbitten, by the morning of February 5, took up their original position, waiting for a prearranged signal - artillery fire - to

the transition in an attack on the Trade. But there was no sign of combat or advance. At about 9 o'clock, our patrols and reconnaissance hundreds began to approach Torgovaya; at the same time, some cavalry units were seen coming out from Torgovaya. Through binoculars one could clearly distinguish about ten regiments of cavalry. But both our patrols and the Bolsheviks did not open

hesitated, not knowing whether it was the enemy, or, perhaps, parts of General Pavlov, having occupied Torgovaya, were moving south. And only with the direct collision of the advanced units, when the machine guns started talking, did the situation become clear. In the meantime, the red cavalry, with a strength of about 9-11 regiments, coming out of Torgovaya, obviously not expecting to meet stubborn resistance, launched an offensive against us. Met by well-aimed fire from our two batteries - the 14th cavalry colonel Stepanov and the 10th military foreman Bochevsky, the red cavalry first retreated, but then repeated about eight cavalry attacks during the day, trying to cover our right flank. All attacks were repulsed by the hurricane fire of our batteries and machine guns. Our units retreated in riffs, waging a stubborn battle, and, with the support of artillery, partially went over to counterattacks. It is interesting to note one episode: with the onset of twilight, the Reds, encouraged by the withdrawal of our batteries to Lezhanka, who had ceased fire, attacked a large herd of bulls with a wild howl, mistaking it for a column of cavalry in the dark. Under the cover of the coming night, breaking away from the pressing enemy, our group retreated to spend the night in the village of Sredny Yegorlyk (Lezhanka), taking up a position in front of the village with a strong outpost. In Lezhanka at that time there were many all kinds of rear establishments: convoys, hospitals, some non-combatant units, workshops, which did not even assume that they were in close proximity to the enemy. Quite unexpectedly, finding themselves under the blow of the enemy, all these institutions and teams hastily, even before dawn, evacuated to the south. On February 6, the enemy showed no activity, except for clashes between reconnaissance units. On February 7, around 10 am, the Reds tried several times to capture the village, but all their attempts were repulsed by artillery and machine gun fire and frequent counterattacks. On February 8, Budyonny launched an attack on Lezhanka with all his might in the morning, and by

By the evening of the same day, units of General Golubintsev went to the village of Ploskaya (Novo-Korsunsky) for the night. On February 9, Budyonny with the 6th and 4th cavalry divisions attacked Ploskaya and, after several repeated attacks, occupied the village, pushing our units to the west, to the village of Ivanovsky. By evening, our units were located in the village of Nezamaevskaya and in the village of Ivanovsky, and Budyonny, leaving a strong barrier in the village of Ploskaya, moved further south with a cavalry army, towards the village of Belaya Glina, where, as it turned out later, he attacked and destroyed the 1st The Kuban corps of General Kryzhanovsky, who at that time was fighting with the red infantry (with the 20th, 34th and 50th Soviet rifle divisions), advancing from the villages of Bogoroditskoye and Razvilnoye. I did not know about the location of the corps of General Kryzhanovsky and, in general, any of our units in Belaya Glina, just as it was not known about the whereabouts and fate of the cavalry group of General Pavlov. Otherwise, of course, I would have contacted General Kryzhanovsky and would have retreated to Belaya Glina, and not to Nezamaevskaya, and an unexpected disaster with the 1st Kuban Corps would have been avoided. In general, it should be noted that even the senior commanders of the Don headquarters were not sufficiently oriented about the situation during the entire period of withdrawal and fighting in the Kuban, and this is one of the important reasons for our defeat. On February 10, when I was with a cavalry group in the village of Nezamaevskaya, I established a telephone connection through the Kornilov regiment with the commander of the Don Army, General Sidorin. Scouts were sent to search for and communicate with General Pavlov. The village of Ploskaya was monitored. The day passed quietly. To reinforce my group, the 4th cavalry regiment of the Young Don Army arrived, consisting of two hundred with a strength of about 150 sabers. On February 11, my units concentrated in the area of the Ivanovsky farm, 5-6 versts from the village of Ploskaya, with the aim of recapturing Ploskaya. At this time, General Sidorin informed me by telephone that by evening the 10th Don Cavalry Division should approach Ploskaya from the side of Sredne-Egorlytskaya. Without waiting for the approach of the 10th division and having re

The size of the enemy who occupied Ploskaya, our units captured the village with an energetic raid at about 12 noon, capturing carts from the Reds and recapturing a group of prisoners, about 40 people taken by the Reds during the defeat of the 1st Kuban Corps. By the evening of February 11, the 10th Don Cavalry Division of General Nikolaev entered the village of Ploskaya.

With the approach of the 10th division, I received an order to send the 4th regiment of the Young Army to Yekaterinodar for operations against the "greens"; the Kuban division was also sent there, and with the rest of the units I entered into submission to General Nikolaev for further operations. For the

night, units of General Golubintsev settled down in the area of the village of Ploskaya: headquarters, three regiments and two batteries in the village, and one regiment with two guns in the Ivanovsky farm. At 10 o'clock in the evening, I received a brief order from the headquarters of the 10th division: "From the 14th cavalry brigade, send reconnaissance on the morning of February 12 to the village of Belaya Glina and Gorkaya Balka

and at 8 o'clock to act in the vanguard to the village of Belaya Glina."

No information about the enemy, about the general task, and about other parts of the group of General Pavlov was reported.

On the morning of February 12, when the head of the avant-garde advanced three versts south of the village of Ploskaya (Novo-Korsunsky) along the road to Belaya Glina, reports were received from patrols that the enemy, with a force of about 8–9 regiments of cavalry, had set out from the village of Belaya Glina and moved to the village of Gorkaya Balka. At the same time, to the north of Gorkaya Balka, binoculars could distinguish enemy cavalry columns. The head of the group, General Nikolaev, was still in Ploskaya. A situation report was sent to him. The vanguard stopped, the units pulled themselves into a platoon column. After some time, General Nikolaev with his chief of staff, military foreman Frolov, went to the head of the column. Now the enemy columns were sharply defined. The enemy makes changes.

In response to my report on the situation and to a question about further actions, General Nikolaev stated that we were ordered to occupy Belaya Glina, and therefore we would leave here, in the

hollow, a barrier of two hundred, and we ourselves would go to Belaya Glina. Such a prin

"I believe that a siding can occupy Belaya Glina, since intelligence reports that the enemy has cleared the village and moved to Gorkaya Balka, and our task, I believe, is to defeat the enemy," I objected.

"Then we'll leave a barrier here - one brigade, and we'll go to Belaya Glina ourselves," General Nikolaev says hesitantly. - Pay attention, Your Excellency, that the enemy is building a battle formation, you can see through binoculars, now there will be an attack. - To the reserve column! - orders General Nikolaev. A detachment of four brigades (12 regiments) is building reserve columns in a hollow, to the right of the road, in a checkerboard pattern, so that the enemy hardly sees us: in the center is the 14th brigade (General Golubintsev), to the left of the ledge forward the 9th brigade (Colonel Dyakonov), to the right with a ledge back, the 10th brigade (Colonel Laschenov) and the 13th brigade (Colonel

Zakharevsky). The head of the group, General Nikolaev, leaves for the left flank, in front of the 9th brigade, with him the chief of staff, military foreman Frolov, they consult. I am also present here, along with the commander of the 9th brigade, Colonel Dyakonov, and other brigade

commanders with their brigades. The result of the meeting with the chief of staff: send a

hundred from the 9th brigade to the lava. I, seeing that General Nikolaev still does not have a definite decision, order the commander of my artillery battalion, Colonel Stepanov, who is near me, to take a position, and put one battery to the north, behind the village of Ploskaya.

The enemy opened artillery fire and is building a battle formation for an attack. We already have losses from artillery fire.

- Give orders, order to build a battle formation, - I say to General Nikolaev. The general's face shows confusion and indecision. Seeing that the Reds can take us away like petrified chickens, I order my batteries to open fire. I give the order to the orderly: - The 14th brigade in the line of columns!

The face of General Nikolaev is terribly familiar to me, but I cannot remember where I saw him. "Where did I meet you, Your Excellency?" - Yes, I was in your squad! There is no time to talk more - the enemy goes on the attack, I say again: - Order to build a battle order! - Attack with your brigade, - says General Nikolaev, - and we will support you. I jump to my brigade, I command: "Build the front! Trumpeter! On the front ledge! The melodious sounds of the signal fill the frosty air and cheer you up. The brigade, moving forward, manages to deploy two right-flank regiments and goes on the attack on the Reds, marching in the line of columns; in the intervals of the red machine guns on carts. Shouts of "hurrah!", and in one minute my brigade loses 150 riders and horses from machine-gun fire; my messenger falls near me, hit by a bullet. The brigade attacked from the front, and from the left flank the enemy fell en masse on my left-flank regiment, which was marching on a ledge and had not yet had time to turn around, and crushed it. The other two regiments, having received a blow to the flank and from the front, after a brief hand-to-hand fight, were thrown back to the right. The 9th, 10th and 13th cavalry brigades, standing in the reserve columns, remained spectators and, instead of hitting the enemy from both flanks, without receiving any orders, seeing the Reds right in front of their eyes, who fell in their entire mass on the 14th brigade, deafened by screams "hooray!" and machine-gun chatter, the crowd rush to the right back, leaving all the artillery in red, about 20 guns, which not only did not fire a single shot, but did not even take a position. Only two batteries of the 14th brigade fired, and the 10th cavalry battery of the valiant military foreman Bochevsky, opening heavy fire on the attacking Reds, introduced great confusion into their ranks, forcing them to linger, and thus made it possible for units of the 14th brigade to immediately stanitsa Ploskaya to break away from the enemy, get in order and cover the retreat of the cavalry g

... We lost the battle due to the confusion of the chief, having all the data in order to win it: both an advantageous position, and superiority in numbers, and the mood of the Cossacks, encouraged by recent successes - the defeat of Guy's cavalry division and Azin's 28th rifle division with the capture of the division chief. As if we were pursued by some kind of evil fate - mistakes after mistakes, turning into crimes. And the general conclusion of Alexander Vasilyevich: "After an unsuccessful battle on February 12, the cavalry group of General Pavlov near the village of Ploskaya (Novo-Korsunsky) began the Golgotha of the white cavalry." And here is how G. N. Rakovsky describes the background of the raid of the group of General Pavlov, designed to save the Armed Forces of the South of Russia from defeat: at the front. In the right-flank army, therefore, there were no more than three thousand bayonets and checkers. Meanwhile, the entire Cavalry Army of Budyonny, having recovered from the defeat, moved on Tikhoretskaya on January 29. This was of great importance, because the command received accurate information about the new plan of the Bolsheviks, which consisted in making further transfers of troops from Central Russia in the Stavropol direction and the center of gravity of their actions, in view of the failures that befell them in January on the Don, to transfer to the emerging Kuban army. It was here that the Don command came up with a plan that was approved by the commanders of the Don Army corps. In view of the unhealthy, semi-Bolshevik mood in the Kuban, let the Kubans experience the charms of the Soviet paradise, and themselves, regardless of Budyonny acting in the rear, move most resolutely to the north. It was not difficult to break the entire army that stood in front of the Don at the time, as the representatives of the Don command thought. After that, it was supposed to go forward, to the north, depending on the situation. Budyonny, if he had moved to Yekaterinodar, would have been isolated or, in any case, deprived of transportation, communications and could not have done much harm.

This plan has already almost begun to be carried out, but the commander-in-chief categorically spoke out against it. Disagreeing with the bold decision, Denikin pointed out that it was impossible to abandon the base, abandon the wounded, etc. The commander of the Don Army objected that the families and the wounded would find themselves in a terrible situation if the armed forces retreated south and fought long battles. Kutepov did not agree with this plan, who referred to the fatigue of the corps after the Rostov battles, to the wounded, the sick, to the families of officers who would have to be abandoned. Thus, it was not possible to carry out the planned extremely risky, although, as subsequent events showed, and less undoubtedly than the withdrawal to Novorossiysk, the operation failed, and therefore it was decided to remove and transfer the main mass of the Don cavalry, which constituted Pavlov's group, for operations against the cavalry Budyonny. Pavlov was ordered to attack Budyonny in the direction of Torgovaya, for which he would move in a forced march and eliminate pressure on Tikhoretskaya as soon as possible. At this time, Guy's Soviet division crossed the Don and began to put pressure on the right flank of the 1st Don Corps. On February 3, Pavlov defeated Guy's division and moved to Torgovaya. On February 4, a telegram was sent to Pavlov from the headquarters of the Don Army with an order to give the units a day's rest, and at the headquarters it was assumed that Pavlov, setting off from the area of the Vesery farm, where he was located, to Torgovaya, would follow Manych and use the village of Platovskaya for the day's rest, so as not to freeze Cossacks in the steppes. But Pavlov, striving to collide with Budyonny as soon as possible, found it necessary to walk along the uninhabited left bank of the Manych, along the deserted steppes, without roads, by compass. On February 4, Pavlov attacked Shablievka, where he almost captured Budyonny himself, but the attack was fragmented due to a snowstorm and frost, and therefore unsuccessful. On February 5, Pavlov was forced to retreat to the village of Yegorlytskaya. During this campaign, due to severe frost and wind, due to the complete absence of housing, half of the corps literally froze to death. Instead of 10-12 thousand

the group has 5.5 thousand checkers left. The rest, including Pavlov himself, and the entire command staff, were frostbitten or completely frozen ... It

was a colossal blow to the Armed Forces in the South of Russia. True, Rostov was taken by volunteers on February 7, but what could it matter when the enemy's manpower was not defeated and Budyonny's cavalry went far to the rear from the Torgovaya side - to Tikhoretskaya, when the front and rear were shocked by the damage that they suffered from frost Don cavalry.

Immediately after the raid, when Pavlov's cavalry rested in the area of the Ataman station, I was at this station and talked with the Cossacks and officers. Horror emanated from the stories of the participants in this campaign. For four days the Don cavalry marched across the deserted steppes. In 24-degree frost with a strong wind, there was literally nowhere to stop and hide from the cold. We spent the night in the uninhabited winter huts of the Don horse breeders, and one winter hut from several huts accounted for an entire division. Only a few lucky people managed to get under the roof. The rest huddled near the fences and their horses. There

was no fuel even for fires. "Last night," the raid participants told me, "we stood near the Market. The Bolsheviks fired vigorously at us, but the bullets did not frighten anyone. The cold was worse. Thousands of frozen ones remained behind us in the steppes. The blizzard had already covered them. The survivors huddled beside their horses. You stand five or ten minutes.

You feel that you start to doze, that you fall asleep, you fall ...

A few more minutes - and you will fall asleep forever. Shake yourself up. If you approach your neighbor, you will see that he, too, is freezing. What to do? You throw yourself at him, fall together in the snow ... We start to fight in the most real way. You will warm up and ... as if for fifteen or twenty minutes it will become easier. After this nightmarish trip, thousands of frostbitten people were taken to the Ataman station and, for lack of even wagons, were put on open platforms. The frost still reached 25 degrees. Meanwhile, on the front line (Bataysk - Torgovaya), due to the absence

railway traffic. Frostbitten locomotives waited all day. They did not wait and ... crawled along their units resting after the raid in the vicinity of the station. Budyonny himself recalled: "The steppe, dotted with hundreds of killed and frozen White Cossacks, presented a terrible picture. Frozen people and horses lay among the abandoned artillery and machine guns, ammunition boxes and broken wagons. Some froze, curled up in a ball, others on their knees, and others standing waist-deep in snow, next to their frozen horses ... The Whites lost up to five thousand people and two thousand three hundred horses killed and frozen.

In the troops of Denikin, demoralized by the autumn-winter defeats, disagreements and strife began. The Kuban people no longer had warm feelings for the volunteers, the Don people suspected the Kuban of Bolshevism, Sidorin and Pavlov, having Budyonny in the rear, were in a hurry to throw the Don cavalry behind him, not taking into account that people would freeze to death in the bare steppe in a 25-degree frost, and horses. As a result, the elite Don cavalry lost more than half of its composition from frost, and not from Budyonnovsk drafts.

As a result, the Whites did not really manage to use the delay of the cavalry at the Batai plug. Budyonny, on the other hand, acted quite competently against Pavlov, did not go deep into the steppe, kept to the inhabited farms and villages, forced the enemy to spend the night

in an open field, and ultimately defeated the best Don cavalry. After that, the Cavalry defeated the white cavalry in the area of the villages of Sredneegorlykskaya and Yegorlykskaya in the largest cavalry battle of the Civil War from February 25 to March 2, 1920. Budyonny cut the railway at the Gorky junction and attacked the enemy from the rear, completely knocking out an elite officer regiment. "The spirit was lost again," wrote Denikin about this battle. After that, the Armed Forces of the South of Russia rolled back to Novorossiysk without stopping. The remnants were evacuated

indiscriminately to the Crimea, where Wrangel replaced Denikin as commander. The successful actions of the First Cavalry and other Re

whites and hastened the end of the Civil War. Realizing this, in Moscow they arranged a triumphal reception for Budyonny and other red commanders. On April 5, the poet Demyan Bedny and singer Fyodor Chaliapin visited the commander's personal carriage. Budyonny treated them to champagne, which was eaten with Don fat. Chaliapin, with a glass of champagne in his hand, said: - Tell me, Semyon Mikhailovich, why the whites are afraid of you like fire. You are a person of average height, cheerful, even kind. Champagne was not spared. Otherwise, Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin took me through the Kremlin cellars. This wine, he says, from the royal reserves, is ten years old, this one is a hundred. I told him: "So let me taste it!" And he: "No, you can't, this is the people's good." Think what a miser! After that, the musicians of the Cavalry performed the "March of Budyonny" and ditties that delighted Chaliapin. The great singer immediately sang an aria from "Boris Godunov", and the army craftsmen accompanied him on the button accordion. So, under champagne with bacon, Semyon Mikhailovich, who until recently was the leader of a half-savage partisan freemen, was embedded in the political system of the young Soviet state.

Chapter Four

THE DUMENKO CASE

While the Cavalry was fighting the Whites on the Don and Manych, dramatic events unfolded next to it related to the fate of the former head of Budyonny, Boris Dumenko. On the night of February 23-24, 1920, by order of I. T. Smilga, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Caucasian Front, he was arrested along with the headquarters of the Consolidated Cavalry Corps. The reason was the recent (February 2) murder of the corps commissar Mikeladze and other communists, as well as the allegation that Dumenko persuaded Budyonny to joint action against the Bolsheviks. Dumenko was tried by a tribunal and shot in Rostov on May 11, 1920. The basis of the verdict was, as they said then, "the conscience of the judge and the revolutionary sense of justice." On August 27, 1964, the verdict of the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Republic of May 5-6, 1920 in the case of Dumenko and his comrades was canceled and

due to the absence of corpus delicti in the actions of the convicts. But back in 1967, A. I. Mikoyan confessed to the writer Yuri Trifonov: "I know that two people - Voroshilov and Budyonny - are against rehabilitation. It was a feud between the military... It happens often... They still can't reconcile." What evidence was presented to Dumenko at the trial? He was accused of wearing officer epaulettes in public. Budyonny insisted on this, although he noted at the same time that Boris Mokeevich, most likely, was an impostor and had never been an officer. White newspapers claimed: "Dumenko among the Bolshevik leaders is a far from ordinary personality, one of the few native talents." Such praise from the enemy could, if desired, be regarded by the tribunal as an attempt to lure the commander to the side of the whites. As for the actual murder of Mikeladze, at first it was stated that Dumenko himself shot him when the commissar tried to stop the wild drinking at the corps headquarters. This version quickly crumbled - there were no witnesses, besides, the murdered was a friend of Dumenko and just recently solemnly handed him a party card. As a result, the investigation concluded that "military commissar Mikeladze was killed by an unknown orderly of the headquarters of the cavalry corps, but commander Dumenko and his headquarters are the instigators and direct harborers of the killer." Even before that, the commission sent by the RVS summed up: "Dumenko and his staff officials are speculating on the animal instincts of the masses with their activities, trying to gain popularity and support for themselves by giving free rein to encourage robbery, drunkenness and violence. Their worst enemies are every political worker who is trying to turn the unbridled and wild masses into a regular, disciplined and conscious fighting unit. After the trial of Dumenko, his lawyer Isai Izrailevich Shik told one of his acquaintances, also a lawyer: "I lost the process. Budyonny and Voroshilov interfered a lot with me. But it is still unclear how everything will turn out: in the prison yard, the Red Army soldiers spoke out for Dumenko. So Semyon Mikhailovich played a certain role in the fall of Dumenko, although the role of Sm

According to legend, one of the former Dumenkovites said to Budyonny, when, after the arrest of Dumenko, he was touring the line: "You, Senka, don't f ... di, but play the lady!" In the newspaper "Soviet Don" March 9, 1920 was first reported on the arrest of Dumenko and his comrades. There, in particular, it was said: "The commission of inquiry appointed by the RVS of the army to investigate the circumstances under which the murder took place and the search for the perpetrators, came to the conclusion that Mikeladze's killers are at Dumenko's headquarters. In addition, there was information about the activities of Dumenko and his headquarters that required the speedy intervention of the RVS of the army in order to prevent the outrages that were happening at the headquarters. Drunkenness and banditry were common phenomena and had a corrupting effect on the entire corps. Almost no political work was carried out in the Corps, since Comrade. Dumenko and his associates did not recognize any commissars and representatives of the Soviet government, they terrorized them with various threats. While the corps was in Novocherkassk, drunkenness and debauchery reached unprecedented proportions. The ranks of the headquarters staged orgies with women, made illegal requisitions and confiscations. Dumenko himself encouraged all these outrages and crimes, loudly declaring his sympathy for Father Makhno. All these crimes prompted the timely and energetic order of the Revolutionary Military Council to arrest Dumenko and his henchmen. The investigation into the Dumenko case until the arrival of the representative of the Revolutionary Tribunal is conducted by Comrade Beloborodov, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army." The commander was dealt with quickly and brutally. The Dumenko case was Budyonny's first compromise with his conscience - after all, quite recently they fought together with Krasnov's Cossacks in the Salsk district and near Tsaritsyn. Here, the rivalry with Dumenko, who was once the commander of Budyonny, played a role, and most importantly, the fear that an attempt to shield a comrade in arms could bring him to the tribunal himself. Recently, more exotic versions have also appeared - for example, an article by Colonel S. Kolomnin in Nezavisimaya Gazeta about how Dumenko, when he was the head of Budyonny, ordered him to be flogged in public as punishment for the atrocities

two hefty "Dumenkovites" tore off Budyonny's shirt and laid him on a bench for flogging, he protested in a rage: "Yes, I have a full St. To which Dumenko, who was standing next to him, laughed and replied: "What kind of Knight of St. George are you, Semyon, you hung candy wrappers for yourself in the market, and real Cossacks don't do that." [1] Although the author

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refers to the memoirs of some "veterans-first horsemen", his story seems fictional. Corporal punishment in the Red Army was prohibited, and even the flogging of one commander by another in front of subordinates looks completely unrealistic. By the way, the comparison of Budyonny and Dumenko as a whole speaks in favor of Semyon Mikhailovich. Budyonny was able to subjugate the elements of the masses to some extent and was ready to submit to the communists, while Dumenko did not want to submit to the communists and could not curb the elements of his units, practically did not use repressions against rapists and marauders. Semyon Mikhailovich, perhaps, in his heart did not complain about the commissars, but in public, even when he was very drunk, he never allowed abuse against them, as well as anti-Semitic statements. Cunning by nature, Budyonny has long understood that it is possible and necessary to get along with the new government. The authorities, in turn, valued him as the only leader of the equestrian masses, on whom more or less less to be relied upon.

The reason for such tolerance lies in the fact that Budyonny was a spontaneous statesman, and Mironov and Dumenko were populist anarchists who followed the lead of the masses and tried to become a "third force" between the Reds and Whites. Therefore, Budyonny later acquired the important status of a symbol of the state principle for the peasant masses, turning into a living legend during his lifetime. He personified the peasantry that accepted Soviet power. Later, when forced collectivization swept across the country, which Budyonny did not dare to condemn, but, on the contrary, fully supported it, the authorities appreciated how convenient a propagandist figure she had. The Budyonnovsky image was successfully exploited right up to the first months of the Great Patriotic War. Then after

a break caused by the not very successful actions of Semyon Mikhailovich at the front, there was some lull, but at the end of the 1950s, under Khrushchev, Budyonny was solemnly returned to the pantheon of heroes. He was finally awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, his memoirs were published in mass circulation. In his old age, the former commander of the First Cavalry, it seems, sincerely believed that he was the main hero of the Civil War. And he tried to eliminate competitors, now

from the memory of the people. He saw such competitors primarily in the person of Mironov and Dumenko. Even after the rehabilitation of Dumenko, Voroshilov and Budyonny retained their former opinion about him, as well as about Mironov, who had been rehabilitated even earlier. On January 10, 1966, Budyonny sent Voroshilov an informational material in 90 typewritten pages, entitled "On the rehabilitation and praise in the periodical press of Mironov F.K. and Dumenko." About Mironov, this noteworthy document prepared by Budyonnovsk's envoys said, in particular, the following: "At a rally organized by him on August 22 in Saransk, Mironov said that" the communists are destroying Russia, they have decomposed the army, and therefore we, the Cossacks, need to go to the front now, defeat Denikin, and then turn the bayonets on Moscow in order to throw down the Council of People's Commissars and establish real Soviet power. The order for the Don Corps, signed by Mironov, said that the reasons for the defeat of the Red Army were explained by "the continuous malicious acts of the ruling party, the Communist Party, which had restored against themselves the general indignation and discontent of the working masses" and "in order to save the revolutionary gains, there is only one way left: to topple party of —

communists. Down with the one-man autocracy and the bureaucracy of the commissars and communists." [2] The informational material also stated that in the process of preparing the rehabilitation, "all documents that at

least to some extent characterize Mironov positively were copied in the archives

it was said: "In his ultimatum letter to V. I. Lenin, Mironov called "all the activities of the Communist Party aimed at the extermination of the Cossacks in general" and demanded an agreement with the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. Vladimir Ilyich then gave instructions on the indispensable capture of Mironov and bringing him to justice. At the same time, Lenin emphasized that "along with the complete destruction of Mamontov's gangs, the capture of Mironov is of great, enormous (underlined by V. I. Lenin) significance." [3] About Boris —

Dumenko, the same reference said: "However, in archival materials there is evidence that Dumenko condoned robberies and Cossack requisitions, and also appropriated a lot of confiscated valuables. On this basis, he had conflicts with political workers, whom Dumenko scolded in front of the fighters, setting the fighters against political committees. So, in the report of the VRID of the military commissar of the Consolidated Cavalry Division S. Pitashko dated 12/29/1918, it is said that "the soldiers, enraged by Dumenko's incendiary speech, were ready to deal with political committees, but this violence was warned by assistant. Commander Comrade Budyonny" (TsGAOR. F. 192. Op. 2. D. 101.

L. 30). On March 14, 1919, the political commissar of a separate cavalry division, V. Novitsky, reported to the Revolutionary Military

Council of the 10th Army: "In a few days, when Dumenko took up his duties as commander, the division became unrecognizable, robberies began along the entire route. The reason for them is the chief: he gave the Chechens the right to take everything of value, such as gold, silver and other more valuable things. Of course, the entire staff of the division knows about this, from the chief of staff to the Red Army soldiers, inclusive. And such an act has a degrading effect on others. The division commander has 5 carts, including 2 crews loaded with various things, of course, requisitioned ... In the last explanation that was between me and the division commander, he said that he would arrest and shoot all the political committees of the division. To the question I asked: "Does he want to recognize for the political committees those directives that were given by the F

in the most categorical way he stated that he “does not recognize” (TsGASA. F. 193. Op. 1. D. 34. L. 21, 22). In the absence of a regular centralized supply and constant material shortcomings, the fighters easily succumbed to the temptation to plunder and honored those who did not stop this. Political workers fought against robberies and looting, infringing on Dumenko's partisan self-will, which is why he disliked them. It is significant that when on March 24 Dumenko was appointed assistant chief of staff of the 10th Army for the cavalry unit, he, fearing punishment for indulging robberies and humiliating political commissars, sat out for about a month in Bolshaya Martynovka and at Kuberle station. Reporting that he could be arrested in Tsaritsyn, Dumenko turned to S. M. Budyonny, G. K. Shevkoplyasov and D. P. Zhloba for protection (Minutes of the meeting of commanders and fighters of the 4th cavalry division of April 18, 1919 - from the personal archive of S. M. Budyonny) ... Dissatisfied with the communists, he also scolded the Soviet government, which, as he put it, “was captured by the communists and the Jews” ... The military commissar Yermakov in a memorandum reports that on September 15-20, 1919, he and the political committee assistant Tuboltsev were invited to the shtakor (corps headquarters. - **B.S.**). “With our arrival, Comrade Dumenko asked all those present to leave, arguing that a secret meeting would be held on all cases. The three of us left alone, Dumenko said that we had been known to him since 1918 as old, experienced terrorists, and he considered our presence with him necessary. “I did a lot for the revolution,” Dumenko continued, “but still I have not yet received the trust I deserve from the Center and the corps I created. I see myself humiliated by every bastard, meaning representatives of Poarm 10 and others, and it is necessary to destroy this bastard, as he stands in my way. I consider it necessary to note that Dumenko did not know that I was a communist, but Comrade. He paid no attention to Tubolts

monitor my actions, and there were cases, canceled some of my orders. Dumenko ordered to terrorize these two representatives, but did not name their names, since I protested to him. Further Comrade. Yermakov writes: "One could always hear from Dumenko that the Soviet power would soon perish, that Russia had been sold to vile Jews who had sold the suffering Russia. In October 1919, when the corps moved in the Serebryakovo area, outrages intensified with parts of the corps, and when the political committees informed about this, Dumenko gave them a dressing and ordered them to be removed "(TsGAOR. F. 1005. Op. 6. D. 486-6. L. 183–184). The

military commissar of the 2nd Donpolk of the 3rd brigade of the Consolidated Cavalry Corps Veremeenko Timofey Lavrentievich reported: "In the village of old Kriusha, Kalachevsky district, I went with brigade commander Trekhsvyatkov at 10.00 to the headquarters of the corps and stopped at the door. At the headquarters of the corps were Dumenko, Abramov, Blehert, the chief of staff of the 2nd mountain brigade Dronov and others. Dumenko ridiculed the Jews, that is, Jews, said that the Jewish commissars took the country into their hands and were preparing red officers - Jews. You won't get anything good from this rubbish, he said. I know these merchant officers, let them line up at least 200

people, I will kill them all "(TsGAOR. F. 1005. Op. 6. D. 486-6. L. 187). Former corps commissar Dumenko Sergei Petrovich Ananiev, wounded in battle by a shot in the back, wrote during the investigation of the Dumenko case: "Dumenko is a petty-bourgeois degenerate with great pride and petty vanity. He was not politically educated, he does not have a correct concept of Soviet power and is more inclined towards the ideology of populism (SR). He did not recognize political institutions and the Communist Party and vilified them in every possible way. Petty vanity made him imagine himself as an unusually great hero and commander, which gave him the opportunity to express himself: "If I want, I'll remove the entire front to Moscow itself." Our recent successes in the Don region inspired him, he began to think of himself almost as Napoleon. He said that he did not

they are recognized only by the RVSR (Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic. - **B.S.**)”(Ibid. L. 416). Indeed, by January 1920, Dumenko's behavior was defiant and defiant. Here is how the meeting with Dumenko is described not by a political worker of the Concorps, but by the commissar of the 2nd brigade of the 23rd rifle division, comrade Frolov: !“ The brigade commander asked him who he was. The Caucasian replied: “Who are we? We are dumenkovtsy! Clean the apartment immediately or we'll throw you out.” I called my orderly and ordered him to fetch the commandant's team. Then the Caucasian pulled out a dagger and, shouting “we will cut you!” rushed at me, threatening to kill me. When I found out that Dumenko was standing at the gate, I asked him to come in. He entered, widened his eyes and shouted at the brigade commander, who did not know Dumenko's face: "Get up, you bastard, the corps commander is talking to you!" A square scolding followed. Raging more and more, Dumenko pulled out a revolver and shouted: “Look, bastards, communists, bandits, cut them down!” Two men rushed at the brigade commander and tore off his revolver. I was immediately grabbed by two hands, and the third grabbed a chair and swung it. I rushed to the side, and the chair hit only on the arm. I tried to run out of the room, but they seized me again and demanded a weapon. The revolver lay on the square, and I silently pointed to it. My brigade commander and my revolvers were seized and, cursing, the whole company left. Dumenko, sitting on a horse, turning to Shevkoplyasov and Blekhert, who appeared, said: “They will hang all these communist bastards” ”(TsGAOR. F. 1005. Op. 6. D. 486-6. L. 185-186). Presenting this report of the political committee Frolov, together with the report of the brigade commander, the head of the 23rd rifle division reported to the commander of the 9th that residents were complaining about the ugly behavior of Dumenko's units. Political Committee Frolov points out that on the way from Balashov, he heard the groaning and crying of the inhabitants of the villages through which parts of the Dumenko convoy passed. In th

raped many women and teenage girls. This was repeated in other villages (TsGAOR. F. 1005. Op. 6. D. 486-6). Statement to the political department of the corps of the political committee of the 2nd Mountain Brigade G.S. Peskarev: "During the three months of being in the 2nd Mountain Cavalry Brigade, living together with the field staff, I had the opportunity, with frequent visits to the commander Dumenko, Abramov and Blehert of our headquarters, to lead with they argued on political topics and very soon got to know the political faces of both the members of our staff and the field shtakor. All of them, with the exception of Abramov, who is too careful in terms, are ardent opponents of the communist system and the Communist Party and are big anti-Semites. Dumenko and Blehert once declared that the communists could give nothing to the workers and peasants, but that a party would soon be born (clearly alluding to themselves) that would beat both Denikin and the communists. After Dumenko was reprimanded by order of the South-Eastern Front for failing to comply with the order, he, according to the chief supply officer Kravchenko, tore off the Order of the Red Banner and, throwing it into a corner with a curse, said that "I received from the Jew Trotsky, with which I you still have to fight." Hatred and slander against communists and commissars is the distinguishing feature of this company, which, moreover, is not a rape.

During the stay in Degtevo, two sisters of mercy of the enemy were taken prisoner, who were shot the next morning and whom, according to the former commander of the platoon of orderlies Zhornikov, were raped by the whole company from the corps all night. In addition, Zhornikov was expelled from the corps because he could not please their depraved demands, he reports that, in addition to the sisters, in this village they were looking for the 15-year-old daughter of the hostess, where they stood in the apartment, with the aim of violence, but, not finding her, they raped her owner's sister. This statement by G.S. Peskarev was published in the book by I. Smilga "Memoirs. Essays" in 1923. It also states that all the facts stated in the application have been veri

confirmed by the commission of inquiry (TsGAOR. F. 1005. Op. 6. D. 486-6. L.

131). The situation in the Consolidated Cavalry Corps deteriorated sharply after the occupation of Novocherkassk and the looting that broke out in the city, to eliminate which the Revolutionary Military Council of the 9th Army was forced to attract rifle units. While there were robberies, the leaders of the headquarters of the corps were engaged in drunkenness, for which Shevkoplyasov, Blekhert, Kolpakov pleaded guilty during the investigation. Here is what G.K. Shevkoplyasov, the commander of the corps, showed on this occasion (consisting. - **B.S.**) for special assignments: The wine was delivered to the Nosovs by order of the commander. Four or five times these parties were attended by prostitutes. They were delivered by Kravchenko, a specialist in this field. I objected several times to drunks and prostitutes, but they did not listen to me. Kravchenko once almost shot me" (Ibid. L. 346–348). To restore order, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the 9th Army, a communist since 1913, N.A. Anisimov (died in Novocherkassk from typhus), left for Novocherkassk. After reviewing the situation, he sent the following report to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army: "Dumenko is determined by Makhno. If not today, then tomorrow he will try to turn his bayonets. If this is not done now, it is only because he does not quite feel solid ground under his feet. He sends his Red Army soldiers to smash wine shops, rapes women and openly agitates everywhere against the Soviets. The executive committee appointed by me was nearly dismissed. Then I was convinced myself, but in addition, Zhloba and others confirm, and also prejudice. I consider it necessary to immediately arrest him with the help of Redneck. It is necessary to use the parking lot in the city and the presence of a division (rifle). After a while it will be too late, he will certainly perform. They say connection with Budyonny. Answer if you agree to arrest immediately" (ibid.). The measures proposed by N. A. Anisimov were not implemented. He fell ill with typhus ... From

“... From the beginning of the brigade joining the corps ... Dumenko treated me friendly and after some acquaintance asked me the question: why am I not expelling my communists, offering to do so. I replied that the Communists help me a lot, especially in the fight against robbers. After such an answer, Dumenko's attitude towards me changed, the brigade was always given the worst plots and places to spend the night ... In a word, the persecution of me and the brigade began. During the investigation, Dumenko himself testified that “he never interfered with political work and did not seek to protect himself from political control. Nobody expelled communists and political workers from the corps. I seconded only a non-partisan chief of staff who was completely incapable of work ... When asked why I was dissatisfied with some commissars, I answer: the commissars came and said that they were sent to control. I believed that it was necessary to control those bosses who were mobilized, but I went to fight for Soviet power voluntarily. Neither I, nor anyone from my headquarters called the Communists "Jews who settled in the rear", did not carry out anti-Semitic work. I wore the Order of the Red Banner until the red ribbon deteriorated and the thread on the screw was rubbed. I did not take off my order and never said such words that the order was given to me by the Jew Trotsky and I do not want to wear it. “Yid” was a dirty word for me, I called Russians Jews too. Jews I consider unfit for cavalry, they will only spoil the horses. I personally never drank, and in general, after being wounded in the lungs, I was a non-drinker. There were no robberies or banditry. Twice I gave orders to fight against violence and requisitions, calling for this fight and political workers. It seems to me that political committee Peskarev raised all this, whom I caught drunk with a teapot of wine (alcohol). As for the clouds in a conversation with Budyonny, he meant the enemy. What kind of clouds are we talking about, say the testimony of Voroshilov and Budyonny, given by them to the investigator Tegeleshkin on March 29, 1920. Budyonny showed: “January 10th day of the year

I remember there was a question about the banner for the fourth cavalry division, but where I got it from, I did not have to find out. After that, we proceeded to the analysis of operations, where he said that a cloud was leaning in front of us that needed to be broken, but what kind of cloud, I did not understand myself and said that there was nothing to be afraid of, at the moment the enemy was paralyzed and we would unite, we would break him, but here I didn't have to find out in detail about the looming clouds, as someone entered our room and our conversation was interrupted ... "Voroshilov, in turn, claimed:" 4 days after the departure of Dumenko and others, I learned from comrade Sokolnikov that there is an order to arrest Dumenko for failure to comply with combat orders and suspicious behavior. I informed Comrade Budyonny about this and asked him what Dumenko had said to him on his visit and how he explained the reasons for his visit to us. T. Budyonny told me that Dumenko was always talking about the clouds hanging over us, about the need to keep close contact, and so on. T. Budyonny understood this as a fear of White Guard offensives and reassured Dumenko, saying that we now have great strength, we stand close to each other and there is nothing to be afraid of. And only after he found out that Dumenko was being arrested did he begin to interpret Dumenko's words "about black clouds" as a desire to incite him, Comrade Budyonny, to some kind of adventure. Efim Afanasyevich Shchadenko, a member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry, went further than all the cavalymen in his testimony against Dumenko: here me and Voroshilov, and knowing us well from the 10th Army, they could not speak openly with Budyonny ... After dinner, when Comrade Voroshilov and I separated from Budyonny, Dumenko and Shevkoplyas went to Budyonny and talked about something with him. From all this, Voroshilov and I concluded that Dumenko, Shevkoplyas and Abramov had come to probe the ground in Budyonny's army. We just could not, of course, clearly discern their intentions. From Budyonny's conversations, we learned that Dumenko spoke to Budyonny about old friendships and some kind of black clouds that were approach

suggest that Dumenko is embarking on an adventure against the Soviet regime, then Budyonny said that perhaps he did not understand Dumenko and told him that now no black clouds are terrible. Soon our assumptions began to come true. Politician Mikeladze was killed. The political commissars raised the alarm and began to closely monitor the actions of Dumenko's headquarters ... To the question posed to me whether Dumenko proposed to Budyonny jointly present an ultimatum to the central Soviet authorities, I answer that I have not heard this either personally or from others. Nothing more to add on the Dumenko case
I do not have".

It is striking that Budyonny spoke about Dumenko during interrogations much more evasively and cautiously than Voroshilov and Shchadenko. Apparently, the memory of how they fought shoulder to shoulder with the whites was still alive in his soul. And he probably did not consider Dumenko a serious rival at that moment. Only under the influence of the members of the Revolutionary Military Council did he begin to lean toward the idea that the "black clouds" could really mean the commissars. Shchadenko and Voroshilov directly stated that Budyonny began to give such an interpretation of Dumenko's words only after the arrest of the latter. In this one could see a hint of the political unreliability of Budyonny. The war with the Whites was ending, and the Kremlin seriously feared the emergence of a "third force" that could lead the peasant freemen against the "commissar power". Dumenko was considered as one of its potential leaders, as before Mironov, which largely explains the repressions against them. The systematic anti-Semitic attacks of the commander also played a role, which were very negatively perceived by the party and military leadership, where Jews played a prominent role. Here is a quote from the verdict: "Dumenko pursued a systematic anti-Semitic and anti-Soviet policy, scolding the central Soviet government and calling the responsible leaders of the Red Army kikes in the form of insulting swearing." In fairness, we note that Jews also tried to save Dumenko from execution. In addition to the lawyer Shik, it was one of the party leaders of the Don region A. Ya. Rozenberg,

who spoke on a direct wire with the Deputy Chairman of the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Republic A. Anskin. Rosenberg tried to convince his interlocutor that the convicts should be pardoned. He stated: "There were no witnesses in the case. I had to read out the evidence at the preliminary investigation. I personally believe that it would be necessary to talk with the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and, in order to pardon executions, replace them with 15 or 20 years of forced labor due to the revolutionary merits of the corps and in connection with the May Day amnesty ... "However, Anskin rejected this proposal. He stated: "Comrade. Rosenberg, it is strange to me that the tribunal itself seems to initiate a petition for clemency. These considerations you should have taken into account when sentencing. On the part of the Revolutionary Tribunal of the Republic, there are no obstacles in carrying out the sentence ... Execute the sentence immediately ... "Rozenberg was clearly trying to apply the same scheme to the Dumenko case that had previously been applied to the Mironov case, when the harsh sentence was commuted by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, and then Mironov and his comrades were completely released from serving their sentences. But this time, Moscow categorically objected to Dumenko's pardon. The time was already different. When Mironov was tried, Denikin went to Moscow, the Soviet government was very shaky, and she needed Mironov as an authoritative opponent of the Whites among the Cossacks. Dumenko was tried in completely different conditions. Denikin's army was defeated, its remnants were evacuated to the Crimea, and the Civil War actually ended. Now the regime was seriously afraid of the spontaneous movement of the peasantry, dissatisfied with the surplus appraisal and the red terror. And Dumenko just could have become the leader of a major peasant revolt, so now they preferred to shoot him, guided by "revolutionary expediency" and the ancient truth: "The Moor has done his job, the Moor must leave," although there was no evidence of the commander's guilt. Mikeladze's killers were never found. We will probably never know their names or whether they were in any way connected to Dumenko. It is also unlikely that when it will be established

under the "black clouds" of Dumenko in a fatal conversation with Budyonny - the White Guards or the commissars with the Jews. The writer Yury Trifonov characterized Dumenko in the following way in "The Flare of the Bonfire": "No, he was not an ideal hero of the civil war, he was just a hero of the civil war." The same words can be applied to Budyonny. The reason why Budyonny survived and his rivals Mironov and Dumenko died was that Budyonny was able to keep the peasant-Cossack mass in check, if not eradicating, then at least limiting the passion for robbery and anti-Semitism. In addition, Semyon Mikhailovich was ready to endure commissars in his corps, and then in the Cavalry, which Dumenko and Mironov would not do.

wished.

And another thing, probably, was in the personality of Semyon Mikhailovich. Mironov wrote to Lenin on July 31, 1919: "In the practice of real struggle, we have the opportunity to see and observe the confirmation of the wild theory: "For Marxism, the present is only a means, and only the future is the goal." And if this is so, then I refuse to take part in such construction, when the whole people and everything they have acquired are considered as a means for the goals of a distant, abstract future. But isn't modern humanity a goal, not humanity, doesn't it want to live, doesn't it have sense organs, that at the cost of its suffering we want to build happiness for some distant humanity. No, it's time to stop the experiments! Budyonny was ready to accept the Bolshevik thesis about man as a means of building a brighter future. By this, he once again proved that he is not only an excellent rider and an outstanding grunt. He had the talent to convince and lead people, and at the same time he was a good tactician not only on the battlefield, but also in the corridors of power, where he firmly held on to influential patrons - Voroshilov and Stalin.

Chapter Five

ON THE POLISH FRONT

In the spring of 1920, the Russian Civil War seemed almost over. The remnants of the White armies were forced out to the outskirts of the country or into emigration and no longer posed a great danger. On the other hand, Soviet-Polish relations escalated. During the period of Denikin's greatest successes, the Bolsheviks were ready to achieve peace with Poland at the price of concessions to the Poles of almost all of Belarus and a significant part of Ukraine. However, after the defeat of the White Army, Lenin and his comrades began to seriously think about the possibility of exporting the revolution to Poland, and from there to Germany (the success of the German revolution was considered key to the victory of socialism on a world scale). As early as March 17, 1920, more than a month before the start of the Polish offensive, in a conversation between Commander-in-Chief Kamenev and the commander of the Southwestern Front, Yegorov, it was decided to transfer the Cavalry to the Polish Front in marching order. The Polish leader Jozef Pilsudski, himself a former socialist, hatched plans to create a union (federation) of Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Poland, with the latter playing a leading role. On April 21, 1920, he signed an alliance agreement in Warsaw with the fugitive head of the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic Symon Petlyura. Under this agreement, Poland recognized the independence of Ukraine, but took Volhynia and Eastern Galicia for itself, and the army of the Directory was subordinate to the Polish command in the war against Soviet Russia. The Polish army was supplied with a significant amount of French weapons. With its help, the Entente countries hoped to create a "cordon sanitaire" in Eastern Europe against Soviet Russia. On April 25, 1920, Polish and Ukrainian troops launched an offensive in Ukraine and on May 6 occupied Kyiv, reaching the left bank of the Dnieper. The hostilities in Belarus also resumed. The Poles used the moment when the main forces of the Red Army had not yet been transferred from the Southern Front to the West, and managed to capture vast territories. This unexpectedly strengthened the positions of the Bolsheviks, who for the first time acted as the defenders of Russia from an external enemy. Under the influence of patriotic feelings, many officers and generals of the tsarist army entered

- the famous creator of the "Brusilovsky breakthrough", who became the deputy chief of the General

Staff. During the transition of the Cavalry to the Polish front, the first song about Budyonny was born, the words of which were written by the commissar of the 6th, and then the 11th division, Pavel Vasilyevich Bakhturov, a Don Cossack himself, a teacher by profession. It was written to the motive of an old Cossack song "Because of the Forest of Spears and Swords"

From the forests, from the harsh dark
mountains Our cavalry rushes into the
open. In the open, he wants to collect a
strength, To give the last battle to the bourgeoisie.

The formidable cry Budyonny daring called: -
Hey, dashing comrades, everyone is
behind me! Hey guys, don't be shy,
let's go to the fierce enemy as soon as possible!

And our cavalry rushes forward, The
fists, the enemies do not give indulgence.
Hey you, royal serfs, executioners,
Well, try, try, jump!

Soon, soon we will smash all enemies And
live a free, free life ... We will stand up for our
cause with our heads. Glory to the
dashing cavalry of Budyonnovsk!

Bakhturov is also credited with creating the words of the famous song "We are the Red Cavalry" ("March of Budyonny"). However, it is more likely that the words of this song belong to the poet Anatoly D "Aktil" (real name and surname - Nohum Frenkel). The music was written by the famous songwriter Dmitry Pokrass. Here is the full text of this song:

We are red cavalymen, And the
eloquent
epic writers tell a story about us - About how
clear the nights are, About
how in rainy days We boldly and proudly go into battle!

CHORUS:

Lead, Budyonny, bolder us into battle!
Let the thunder rumble,
Let the fire all around, fire all around.

We are all selfless heroes,
And our whole life is a struggle.

Budyonny is our brother. All
the people are with
us. Order - do not hang
heads And look
ahead. After all, Voroshilov
is with us, the First Red
Officer, We will be able to shed blood for the USSR!

High in the clear sky a scarlet banner
flies, We fly at the enemy where the enemy
is visible. And in the battle
of the intoxicating avalanche
swift - Give Warsaw, give Berlin -
And we crashed into the Crimea!

Since the USSR is already mentioned here, this version of the song could not have appeared before the very end of 1922 (it was first published in 1922, and the first public performances date back to 1923). It was she who later became the unofficial anthem of the Cavalry and was widely performed at various anniversary concerts until recently. Most likely, the words about Voroshilov are a later insert that could not have appeared before 1925, when Kliment Efremovich headed the military department - otherwise why was he suddenly called the "first red officer"? Dmitry Yakovlevich Pokrass himself attributed the creation of the march to the middle of 1920, however, according to the chronology of the action, it could not have been created earlier than the end of the year, when the Budennovites entered the Crimea.

The
pride of Semyon Mikhailovich was extremely flattered by the fact that they began to sing songs about him - this reflected his growing popularity in the army and the country. Already after the Great Patriotic War, in 1956, Marshal G.K. Zhukov became four times Hero of the Soviet Union. Among others, he was congratulated by Budyonny, who at that time did not yet have a single Golden Star. Georgy Konstantinovich sadly told him: "Semyon Mikhailovich, they don't sing songs about me, but they sing about you ..." Already on May 14, the troops of the Soviet Western Front of Mikhail Tukhachevsky, having received reinforcements, mo

counterattack, albeit unsuccessful. On June 7, 1920, the 1st Cavalry Army, having gone on the offensive, broke through the Polish Front and on June 8 cut off the supply lines of the Kyiv group of Poles. Polish troops began to hastily retreat from the Dnieper. Pilsudski, counting that Tukhachevsky's armies had not yet recovered from the defeat suffered, transferred several divisions from Belarus to fight Budyonny's cavalry, which he considered not so difficult to defeat. The marshal's calculations were based on the experience of the First World War, when the cavalry showed complete helplessness in the conditions of trench warfare, barbed wire and saturation of the troops with artillery and machine guns. However, in the Soviet-Polish war there was a completely different density of troops and especially fire weapons. There were no continuous lines of trenches, and barbed wire, a terrible enemy of the cavalry, was almost absent. As a result of the Budyonovsky breakthrough, on June 12, Polish and Ukrainian troops left Kyiv. In July, the Western Front also began to push the enemy. In Belarus, Polish troops quickly rolled back in the direction of Warsaw. In anticipation of the imminent victory, the Bolsheviks created in Minsk a "workers' and peasants'" government of Poland, headed by Julian Markhlevsky. There was a threat to the very existence of an independent Polish state. On July 11, British Foreign Secretary George Curzon sent a note to Soviet Russia suggesting that the Red Army should not cross the eastern ethnic border of Poland, known since then as the "Curzon Line" (it basically coincides with the current Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Belarusian borders). The Council of People's Commissars rejected the note, stating that military necessity could force the Soviet troops to cross the designated line (this happened at the end of July). A discussion broke out in the Bolshevik leadership as to whether it was worth advancing further. The head of the military department, Trotsky, who represented the true state of the Red Army better than others, proposed stopping at the Curzon line and making peace. In his memoirs,

the matter to the end, that is, to enter Warsaw in order to help the Polish working masses to overthrow the Piłsudski government and seize power... I found in the center a very firm mood in favor of bringing the war "to the end". I strongly opposed this. The Poles have already asked for peace. I believed that we had reached the culminating point of success, and if, without calculating our strength, we go further, we can pass by an already won victory - to defeat. After the colossal tension that allowed the 4th Army to cover 650 kilometers in five weeks, it could move forward only by the force of inertia. Everything hung on the nerves, and these are too thin threads. One strong push was enough to shake our front and turn a completely unheard of and unparalleled ... offensive impulse into a catastrophic retreat. However, Lenin and almost all members of the Politburo rejected Trotsky's proposal. The Western Front continued its offensive against Warsaw, and the Southwestern Front, led by Alexander Yegorov, against Lvov.

Poland was saved by the decisive actions of Piłsudski and the help with weapons and equipment provided by the Entente countries. The government immediately carried out an agrarian reform, announcing the redistribution of land in favor of small landowners (in Russia, neither Kolchak nor Denikin decided on such a measure). The invasion of the Red Army was seen by the Polish public as an attempt to annex Poland to Soviet Russia, as an attack on the newly acquired independence that many generations of Poles dreamed of. Tens of thousands of volunteers joined the army, evasion from mobilization almost stopped. Piłsudski managed to quickly and covertly remove the main forces from the Southwestern Front and, together with the reinforcements that had approached, concentrated them against

Tukhachevsky's open left flank. On August 16, 1920, the strike force of the Poles under the personal leadership of Piłsudski suddenly launched a counteroffensive on the flank of the Western Front. The Soviet troops were defeated. As Piłsudski wrote later, "in a furious gallop of battle, the until recently victorious armies of the enemy fled in panic, cracking one after another like nuts...". Tukha

completely lost control of the troops, some of which ended up in Polish captivity, and the 4th Army, part of the forces of the 15th and G. Guy's cavalry corps were forced to leave for East Prussia, where they were interned by the Germans.

More than 120,000 Red Army soldiers ended up in Polish captivity, mainly during the battle near Warsaw. It was the most catastrophic defeat of the Red Army in the Civil War. Fatigue had an effect: many older Red Army soldiers, who had endured the First World War, preferred to surrender in the face of a military defeat, rather than continue the fight. The Western Front ceased to exist as an organized force. The Southwestern Front with heavy losses retreated to the east, but was preserved as a single whole. As a result, there were almost no combat-ready units of the Red Army left between Brest and Moscow. As Trotsky testifies, the mood in the Politburo at first prevailed in favor of a "second Polish war" - "once we started, we must finish." However, the chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council managed to convince Lenin and others of the need to end the war: "What do we have on the Western Front? -

Morally broken shots, which are now poured with raw human dough. You can't fight with such an army ... You can still somehow defend yourself with such an army, retreating and preparing a second army in the rear, but it's pointless to think that such an army can again rise in a victorious offensive along a path littered with its own debris. On October 12, preliminary peace conditions were agreed in Riga, and on October 18 hostilities ceased. The day before, Polish troops occupied Minsk without a fight, but immediately left it, retreating west to the agreed border line. By that time, it became clear that the Petliura government was unable to mobilize significant forces in Ukraine, and Pilsudski abandoned the idea of federation, preferring to include the western regions of Ukraine and Belarus, as well as the Lithuanian capital Vilna (Vilnius) in Poland. With the annexation of Minsk, the political and cultural center of Belarus, it would be difficult to avoid granting autonomy to nat

minorities, which Polish politicians did not even want hear.

In the Soviet-Polish war, the First Cavalry, as we see, played a very significant role. And immediately after the end of the war, a discussion began about whether the command of the Cavalry and the Southwestern Front was to blame for the loss of the battle near Warsaw by the Soviet troops. These and subsequent events are worth touching on in more detail. It should

be noted that the morals of the Budennovites did not change at all after their arrival on the Polish front. In particular, the habit of the cavalymen to engage in "self-supply", and in fact - robbery, has not gone away. Here it is also necessary to take into account that after the defeat of Denikin's troops in the North Caucasus, many Cossacks entered the Cavalry Army, who had previously hunted for robbery in the ranks of the Whites, including during the Mammoth raid. So the "combustible material" for robberies and pogroms in the Cavalry on the way to the Polish front only increased. The results were

not long in coming. Already in June 1920, the deputy head of the political department of the Cavalry S. Fazi Zhilinsky submitted a summary to the political department of the front, where he noted the facts of anti-Semitism, robberies, and the killings of prisoners and civilians by the cavalry. He saw the reason for the atrocities committed in "the connivance and encouragement of the command staff." However, following a complaint from the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry, Zhilinsky was recalled to the political department of the Southwestern Front, and the report was disavowed due to the fact that it was supposedly "full of insulting slander against the Cavalry."

Meanwhile, Zhilinskaya claimed: "6th division. Communists - 900 ... Politically, almost all are completely illiterate. Prisoners of war are undressed; hacked up 150 prisoners of war captured in

Novogradvolynsk. The population of Zhytomyr and Berdychev has been completely robbed." The commander of the 6th Cavalry Division, Semyon Timoshenko, immediately wrote his opinion to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army, decisively disavowing Zhilinsky: "I report that Poarm's political report to the center I admit not only does not correspond to reality, but I definitely declare that this is a brazenly invented lie ... No increase in banditry in relation to I don't see the civilia

if you don't eat at the front, it's clear that you'll take a piece of bread from anyone you want ... There was, is, and is now undressing prisoners of war, but it is

already ceasing. Budyonny was completely satisfied with such "convincing" explanations, and the scandal with Zhilinsky's report was hushed up. True, Timoshenko (also a future Soviet marshal) was transferred to another division, and Vasily Kniga took his place in August. Under him, anarchy in the 6th division only rose to new

heights. But while the horsemen were winning victories, the elements of decay among them did not yet pose a serious threat to the combat effectiveness of the army. Note that the Poles did not succeed in defeating the First Cavalry, although the reserves thrown against it, including cavalry, slowed down the advance of the Budennovites. Tukhachevsky, on the other hand, took advantage of the weakening of the Polish forces in his area and on July 4, having received significant reinforcements, including the 3rd cavalry corps of G.D. Guy, went on the offensive with the most decisive goals. He

quickly advanced to the Bug, and then to the Vistula. In his memoirs, Budyonny wrote: "From the operational reports of the Western Front, we saw that the Polish troops, retreating, did not suffer heavy losses. It seemed that the enemy was retreating in front of the armies of the Western Front, saving forces for decisive battles ...

"The main part of the Polish troops at that moment was concentrated against the South-Western Front, where they unsuccessfully tried to defeat Budyonny's cavalry in the Brody area. Marshal Pilsudski recalled: "My

general strategic plan was ... to conduct a vigorous preparation of reserves, finish Budyonny and transfer large forces from the south for the counteroffensive that I was planning from the Brest area."

The Poles failed to "end Budyonny" - they had to surrender Brest and retreat from the Bug to the Vistula. Cavalry, meanwhile, was advancing on Lvov. The swampy Polesie made communication between the Western and Southwestern fronts difficult. Tukhachevsky, who had been demanding the transfer of the armies of the Southwestern Front to him since the end of July, on August 8 proposed to the headquarters of the Southw

control of these armies, since "the situation requires an urgent unification of the armies, and we do not have the means to quickly establish comprehensive communication with them." On August 4, 1920, Stalin reported to Lenin: "Budyonny's hitch is temporary, the enemy threw Lithuanian, Lvov and Galician groups at Budyonny in order to save Lvov. Budyonny assures that he will defeat the enemy (he has already taken a large number of prisoners), but Lvov will be taken, obviously with some delay. In a word, Budyonny's hitch does not mean a turning point in favor of the enemy. Trotsky assessed the events related to the advance of the Cavalry on Lvov in the following way: "The moment came when an independent campaign against Lvov was declared saving, and responsibility for the collapse of the front could be placed on those who prevented the saving campaign against Lvov. The Soviet official

historian S. Rabinovich writes: "The 1st Cavalry Army, which got involved in the battles for Lvov, could not directly help the Western Front, but by taking Lvov, it would have provided much more help to the Western Front, because this would have entailed a transfer to Lvov large forces. Despite this, Trotsky categorically demanded the withdrawal of the 1st Cavalry from Lvov and its concentration in the Lublin region to strike at the rear of the Polish armies advancing on the flank of the troops of the Western Front. "... Due to the deeply erroneous directive of Trotsky, the 1st Horse was forced to abandon the capture of Lvov, without at the same time

being able to refuse assistance to the armies of the Western Front. This opportunity was lost only because the Budyonny-Voroshilov cavalry, in accordance with the directives of Yegorov-Stalin and contrary to the orders of the high command, turned to Lublin with a delay of several days. In 1937, in No. 2 of the Red Cavalry, the article "The Battle Path of the First Cavalry Army" was published, where the author openly admits that the Cavalry Army not only failed to prevent the Polish army from retreating beyond the Bug River, but even "did not disrupt the counterattack of the Poles on the flank of the Red troops advancing on Warsaw. St.

Galicia, did not want to help Tukhachevsky in his main task - the attack on Warsaw. Voroshilov argued that the capture of Lvov would make it possible to "deal a crushing blow to the rear of the White Poles at their shock group." It is absolutely impossible to understand how it would be possible, after capturing Lvov, at a distance of 300 kilometers from the main theater, to strike at the "rear" of the Polish shock group, which in the meantime was already driving the Red Army hundreds of kilometers from Warsaw to the east. In order to just try to deliver a blow to the Poles "in the rear", it would be necessary first of all to rush after them, therefore, first of all, to leave Lvov. Why, then, was it to occupy him? True, it is enough to look at the map to make sure that the Polish troops advancing from Warsaw could in no way have "their rear" in Lvov. However, Voroshilov, who wrote the book "Stalin and the Red Army", obviously still stubbornly continues to believe that Lvov is "in the rear" of the Polish armies, despite the fact that the latter, operating on the Vistula, on the contrary, were themselves "in the rear" of Lvov. Therefore, one must think, Voroshilov, and with him, probably, Stalin, "protested in the sharpest form against the transfer of the cavalry army from near Lvov to the north - to Lublin, to help Tukhachevsky." "Noticing his vile, defeatist maneuvers, the traitor Trotsky deliberately and consciously achieved the transfer of the cavalry army to the north, supposedly to help the Western Front," the Red Star notes indignantly.

Unfortunately, he achieved this transfer too late, we will note. If Stalin and Voroshilov with the illiterate Budyonny had not waged "their own war" in Galicia and the Red Cavalry had been in time at Lublin, the Red Army would not have experienced the defeat that led to the Peace of Riga. Indeed, the editor of the "Red Cavalry" committed a major awkwardness, now recalling this ... The capture of Lvov, devoid of military significance in itself, could make sense only in connection with the uprising of the Ukrainians (Galicians) against Polish domination. But this took time. The pace of military and revolutionary tasks is completely

matched. From the moment the danger of a decisive counterattack near Warsaw was determined, the continuation of the campaign against Lvov became not only pointless, but also criminal. However, front-line ambition, based on the inertia of non-stop movement, came into play. Stalin, according to Voroshilov, did not stop at the violation of charters and orders.

The main initiator of the campaign was Lenin. He was supported against me by Zinoviev, Stalin, and even the cautious Kamenev. Of the members of the Central Committee, on my side was Rykov, who at that time was not yet a member of the Politburo. All the secret documents of that time are at the disposal of the current owners of the Kremlin, and if these documents had even one line confirming the later versions, it would have been published long ago. It is the unfounded nature of the versions, which, moreover, are so radically contradictory to one another,

show that we are dealing with the same Thermidorian mythology.

In 1930, the then official historian N. Popov, who later disappeared, wrote about the Polish campaign in his work "On the 10th Anniversary of the Soviet-Polish War of 1920" that the party made a mistake in attacking Warsaw. True, along with this, he criticized Trotsky's position, considering it erroneous. But in any case, in the central organ of the party in 1930, the official historian admitted that the campaign against

Warsaw was a mistake of the Politburo: "Trotsky is still trying to speculate on the fact that at one time he was against the Warsaw offensive, as a petty-bourgeois revolutionary who considered it unacceptable bringing revolution into Poland from outside. For the same reasons, Trotsky in 1921 spoke out against the help of our Red Army to the Georgian rebels. The party did not listen to Trotsky in 1921, and instead of Menshevik Georgia we have Soviet Georgia. In 1920, the party rejected with equal decisiveness Trotsky's petty-bourgeois pedantry when the Red Army marched on Warsaw. Our mistake was not in the very fact of the campaign, but in the fact that it was conducted by completely insuffic

And here is what A.I. Egorov wrote about the transfer of the First Cavalry Army to the Western Front: "From the area where the 1st Cavalry Army was located on August 10 to the area where the Polish shock 4th Army was concentrated on the river. Vepsch by air line was about 250 km. Even under the condition of moving without battles in a simply marching order, the 1st Cavalry Army could cover this distance, given the fatigue of its previous battles, at best, no less than 8–9 days and could reach the line of the river. Vepsh only by August 19-20 ... And taking into account the resistance of the enemy, earlier than August 21-23, the Cavalry Army of the line of the river. Vepsch would never have been able to achieve. In this, Pilsudski fully agrees with him, pointing out that it was precisely the maneuver to the north that the Polish command expected from the Cavalry and was going to use all forces and means to detain Budyonny: "If Budyonny moves north, then all of our cavalry and the best infantry division should immediately go after him and hinder his progress by any means." Piysudski also pointed out that 3.5 infantry and one and a half cavalry divisions were operating against the Cavalry. Budyonny rightly noted in his memoirs: "All attempts by the commander-in-chief to replace the Cavalry with infantry and completely withdraw it to the reserve, starting from August 6, were unsuccessful. On August 13, speaking on a direct wire with the commander of the Western Front, he stated that the Cavalry was still standing in front of a wall of infantry, which it still had not been able to crush. He also pointed out that later, on August 16, when Tukhachevsky's directive was finally received to withdraw the cavalry from the battle and concentrate it in the Vladimir-Volynsky region for a strike in the Lublin direction, it was even more impossible than five days earlier. The cavalry fought heavy battles beyond the Bug, and there was no one to replace it. So, in fact, it was difficult for Tukhachevsky to blame his neighbors for his own failure. Understanding this, he preferred to refer to the overwhelming superiority of the enemy, assuring that more than 70 thousand Poles opposed 40 thousand bayonets and sabers of the Western Front. There was another reason for the defeat, about which

patriotism of the Poles, who unanimously opposed the Soviet invasion. To a large extent, this was facilitated by robberies and atrocities committed in Poland by the "liberators" from the First Cavalry.

One cannot but agree with this Budyonny explanation of the actions of the First Cavalry during the Battle of Warsaw. In general, we are somehow accustomed to presenting Semyon

Mikhailovich as a dashing fighter, devoid of any operational outlook. Memoirs, of course, Budyonny did not write alone, but with the help of his adjutants no lower than in the ranks of colonel. Yes, and he himself graduated from the military academy, albeit in absentia, under an accelerated program. It is hard to disagree with his arguments that the Cavalry would not have had time to help the Soviet troops near Warsaw, even if there had not been a delay in fulfilling

the order to transfer it to the Western Front. But what Semyon Mikhailovich was mistaken about in 1920, and in his declining years, when he was working on memoirs, was that the capture of Lvov by the Cavalry would be the best help to the troops of Tukhachevsky defeated near Warsaw. In his memoirs, he wrote:

"The enemy preempted us with his counteroffensive. The commander-in-chief, talking with M. N. Tukhachevsky at 1 o'clock on August 18, said that the moment of regrouping the 12th and First Cavalry armies

had been missed and it was necessary to strengthen Brest from the rear. The next day, M. N. Tukhachevsky also admitted this.

By a directive of August 17, the commander of the Western Front demanded that the Lublin grouping of the enemy be liquidated. He ordered the 12th Army to go on the offensive on Kholm-Lyubartov, and the Cavalry Army to exert all its strength and by all means concentrate at

the appointed time in the Vladimir Volynsky-Ustilug area, with the task of advancing behind enemy strike grouping. We are faced with a rather difficult problem. On the one hand, we saw that the position of our troops in the Warsaw direction was really difficult, and we realized our full responsibility. On the

other hand, a simple calculation of time showed that the task assigned to us by the

withdraw from the battle and make a hundred-kilometer march in order to concentrate in the specified area on August 20. And if this impossible had happened, then with access to Vladimir-Volynsky, the Cavalry would still not be able to take part in the operation against the enemy's Lublin grouping, which, as already mentioned, operated in the Brest area. And besides, it was not easy for us to leave Lviv. We leave - and the initiative immediately passed to the enemy, which put the Polish sector of the Southwestern Front in a catastrophic situation.

position.

The forces of the Lvov grouping of the enemy, battered by the Cavalry, were still quite powerful and active. And still no one replaced us. Our 45th and 47th rifle divisions, small in number and exhausted by battles, were not able to occupy the entire front of the Cavalry. It must also be borne in mind that I.E. Yakir's group operated with an open flank, since the left-flank troops of the 14th Army were far behind. In the situation that had developed by August 19, in our firm conviction, the only correct decision was to continue the offensive against Lvov and capture it at any cost. This would lead to the defeat of the enemy's Lvov grouping and the strengthening of the Southwestern Front. Moreover, the capture of Lvov created a threat to the right flank and deep rear of the enemy, who was operating against our armies in the Warsaw direction. In this case, the White Pole command was inevitably forced to transfer significant forces to the Lvov region from the north, which, of course, should have alleviated the situation of the retreating formations of the Western Front. After capturing Lvov, we expected to create at least two Galician divisions, leave them and the group of I.E. enemy from behind the left flank of the 12th Army. We decided to communicate all these considerations to M. N. Tukhachevsky and ask for his instructions. The commander of the headquarters urgently left Borshovichy for Buek and from there at 23:30 on August 19 sent to

Minsk, through the headquarters of the South-Western Front, a report with the

following content: "At this point, units of the Cavalry Army approached the city of Lvov from the southeast and east by 6 ver. The enemy, who had accumulated in front of the Cavalry Army in huge forces, consisting of the 1st and 2nd Cavalry Divisions, the 5th, 6th, 12th and 13th Infantry Divisions, one regiment of the 11th Infantry Division and the garrison of the city of Lvov, consisting exclusively of volunteers, with 8 armored trains, numerous artillery and several squadrons of aircraft, puts up desperate resistance on all approaches to the city of Lvov and even goes on the counteroffensive, and the enemy pulls up reserves to Lvov, bringing up trains by rail. On August 18 and 19, it was not possible to take the city of Lvov, but in two or three days Lvov should be occupied by parts of the Cavalry Army. Leaving the occupied area by the Cavalry Army and replacing it with another unit at the moment and under the given conditions, I consider it absolutely impossible and could have a catastrophic effect on the entire front, in view of the fact that the enemy operating against the Cavalry Army, although he suffered huge losses in the battles of August 17 and 18 in manpower, however, did not lose activity and the ability to largely lead the offensive the same hour, as soon as the Cavalry Army was removed from the combat sector. The group of the Lvov direction, consisting of the 45th and 47th infantry divisions, is not able to hold the enemy's Lvov group, and the flank of the 14th Army lagged behind our left flank by 60-70 ver. Reporting on the above, I ask for your instructions on how to proceed.

Nevertheless, in case the front commander did not agree with our proposal, they prepared an order for the army to withdraw across the Bug

River. All night Kliment Efremovich and I did not sleep, waiting for an answer from Minsk. He arrived around 6 am. M. N.

Tukhachevsky confirmed the directive on the movement of the Cavalry in the area of

Vladimir Volynsky. We immediately sent the prepared order to the formations. He demanded that after retreating beyond the Bug, the 4th division should concentrate in the village of Ruda, the 6th

division in Adamy, the 41st division in Pobuzhany, and the 14th division in Kholoyuva.

had to allocate a shelf. With the approach of parts of I. E. Yakir and after the change of infantry, these regiments joined their formations.

Only one thing can be said here. If, by some miracle, the Cavalry had nevertheless taken Lvov, this success would have ruined it completely and irrevocably. Cavalrymen would certainly have rushed to rob a city that was richer than Rostov. The decomposed Cavalry would be stuck in the Lvov region for a week or two. In this case, it would certainly have been surrounded by a strong Lvov grouping of the Polish army, which, perhaps, would have been helped by other units.

The destruction of the Cavalry could be of strategic and political importance. In this case, Pilsudski, perhaps, would have risked continuing the war with the Soviets, replenishing his forces at the expense of Petliurists and captured Red Army soldiers. In this case, the failed campaign against Warsaw could turn into a campaign against Kyiv, and even Moscow. And if peace with Poland was nevertheless concluded, then without the Cavalry, the liquidation of Wrangel could be delayed, and, perhaps, the "black baron" would have been able to withdraw significantly more troops from Northern Tavia to the Crimea than actually happened, and at the same time take them there and bread of the new harvest. And then the Russian army of whites, in any case, would have a chance to spend the winter in the Crimea. And if at the time of the Kronstadt and Tambov uprisings in the Crimea there would still be a strong group of whites, then the Soviet leadership might not have had enough strength to suppress the peasant uprisings. Yes, and Makhno would then remain an ally in the fight against Wrangel, and it would be

very difficult to liquidate the Makhnovist movement. But all these are purely theoretical assumptions, and the probability of their implementation is still small. Most likely, in the event of the death of the First Cavalry, peace with the Poles would have been concluded at about the same time, and Wrangel would still have been expelled from the Crimea before the end of 1920. But the specific fate of Voroshilov and Budyonny, and many other commanders of the Cavalry, could be different. In the event of the defeat of the Caval

to be captured. Of course, after the conclusion of peace, they would immediately be returned to their homeland. However, the reputation of the leaders of the First Cavalry, both in the eyes of the people and in the eyes of the party leadership, would be hopelessly undermined. It is unlikely that they would have had such a brilliant military career in the future, as it really was. And Stalin would certainly have found other supporters in the military environment. With such a development of events, Voroshilov would hardly have become People's Commissar of Defense, and he and Budyonny would not have been honored with marshal ranks. On the contrary, the leaders of the Cavalry would then have every chance of being in the losing group and becoming victims of the repressions of 1937, either instead of Tukhachevsky, or together with Tukhachevsky. But if Mikhail Nikolayevich then, in August 1920, would have allowed himself to be carried away by the prospect of capturing Lvov, which the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry really hoped for, then, you see, he would have escaped execution in the 37th and would not have dangerous cavalry rivals against him. So Semyon Mikhailovich and Kliment Efremovich, in a good way, should have prayed to Tukhachevsky that he saved them from inevitable disgrace. And in 1937 they cold-bloodedly sent him to be shot... The first cavalry went on a raid on Zamostye in an attempt to help the defeated troops of the Western Front. The raid ended unsuccessfully, the Cavalry suffered heavy losses, was surrounded, but escaped from it. On August 31, near the town of Stabrov, 15 kilometers from Zamostye, Semyon Mikhailovich personally participated in the felling together with the 24th cavalry regiment of the 4th cavalry division. The former platoon commander in this regiment, Pototsky, in the future a major general engineer, recalled: "Looking around, I saw a group of horsemen, and in front of me was the familiar stocky figure of the

commander. "Comrade commander," I shouted with all my strength, "the cavalry is on the right!" But Budyonny and a group of cavalymen continued to gallop with drawn sabers. The commander, looking in either direction, loudly gave the command: - To hell with them! Beat these, then those! The soldiers of the regiment saw the commander, those closest to him

along the chain. This team lifted our spirits, tiredness vanished, shouts were heard from everywhere: - Budyonny is with us! Ur-rr-ah! The regiment moved towards the enemy. The felling began. At first, I still saw Budyonny, tried to cover him with my platoon. The commander was pushy. He knocked one lancer out of the saddle with a strong blow, fell in a duel with another ... In the thick of the battle, when everything was mixed up and a real dump arose, I lost sight of Budyonny. The fight was short-lived, soon the enemy, retreating randomly, disappeared into the forest. And then we saw Semyon Mikhailovich again. He was heated by the battle, the sparkling blade of the saber was lowered, the mustache was provocatively sticking out, the cap, fastened with a strap on the chin, famously strayed to one side. Happy moments ... We rejoiced at the success and were proud of our military commander, brave and invincible in a cavalry battle. According to many reminiscences, it is clear that Budyonny, an excellent rider, knew how to cut like no one else. Both of these qualities helped Semyon Mikhailovich always come out victorious in saber fights. He also shot accurately, but he always gave the saber an advantage over the Mauser. A unique document has been preserved about the Polish campaign of the First Cavalry - the diary of the famous writer Isaac Babel, the author of the sensational collection of short stories Cavalry. Babel, according to someone else's documents of Kirill Lyutov, posing as a Russian, served as a correspondent for the army newspaper "Red Cavalryman" in the 6th Cavalry Division. In Cavalry, which is cruel in itself, some plots related to Jewish pogroms perpetrated by cavalrymen, executions of prisoners and violence against civilians were significantly softened, including due to censorship conditions, as well as in the name of "artistic typification". Ilya Ehrenburg recalled in his memoirs in 1964: "He softened all the terrible places. I compared the diary with stories. He hardly changed his last name, the episodes were the same, he only covered everything with some kind of wisdom. He said, "That's how it was. Here are the people, these people committed atrocities and suffered, mocked and di

the very facts, from the same phrases that he hastily wrote down in a notebook, he then wrote. In

fairness, it should be noted that Babel writes in his diary about the pogroms perpetrated by the Poles, for example, about the Jewish pogrom in Zhytomyr - according to the survivors. Here is an entry dated June 3, 1920: "Zhytomyr pogrom, staged by the Poles, then, of course, by the Cossacks. After the appearance of our advanced units, the Poles entered the city for 3 days, a Jewish pogrom, they cut their beards, this is usually, they gathered 45 Jews in the market, took them to the slaughterhouse, tortured, cut their tongues, screamed throughout the square. They set fire to 6 houses, the house of Konyukhovsky on Cathedral - I examine who rescued - from machine guns, the janitor, into whose arms the mother threw the baby from the burning window - pinned, the priest put a ladder

against the back wall, in this way they were saved. And here is a typical scene of the requisition in the record dated July 12: "A brigade arrives, red banners, a powerful soldered body, confident commanders, experienced, calm eyes of forelock fighters, dust, silence, order, an orchestra, disperse into apartments, the brigade commander shouts to me - nothing do not take from here, this is our area. The Czech, with restless eyes, follows the young dexterous brigade commander dangling in the distance, politely talks to me, gives me the broken cart, but it crumbles. I don't show energy. We go to the second, to the third house. The headman indicates where you can get it. The old man, indeed, has a phaeton, his son buzzes over his ear, it's broken, the front is bad, I think you have a bride or you go to church on Sundays, it's hot, lazy, sorry, riders are roaming, this is how freedom looks at first. I didn't take anything, although I could, I'm a bad

Budenovite from me. " On July 16, Babel wrote in his diary: "About the Budyonovsk bosses - condottieri or future usurpers? They came from among the Cossacks, the main thing is to describe the origin of these detachments, all these Timoshenki, Budyonny themselves recruited detachments, mainly neighbors from the village, now the detachments received an organization from the Soviet authorities ... The young owners have it tall, with traces of rural beauty, delves

others, mom, give him tsitski. Mother - slender and red, lies strictly among these swarming children. Husband is good. Sokolov: these puppies need to be shot, why breed. Husband: small ones will be big ones. On July

18, Babel already foresees future robberies and pogroms in Poland: "An order has been received from the South Western Front, when we go to Galicia - for the first time Soviet troops cross the line - to treat the population well. We are not going to a conquered country, the country belongs to the Galician workers and peasants and only to them, we are going to help them establish Soviet power. The order is important and reasonable, will the flea marketers follow it? No. Let's speak. Trumpeters. The commander's cap flashes. Conversation with the chief that I need a horse. We are going, forests, arable land are reaping, but little, miserable, in some places two women and two old men. Volyn century-old forests are majestic green oaks and hornbeams, it is clear why the oak is the king. We go along the paths with two headquarters squadrons, they are always with a commander, these are selected troops. Describe the decoration of their horses, sabers in red velvet, curved sabers, vests, carpets on the saddles. Poorly dressed, although each has 10 jackets, such chic, probably. Arable lands, roads, sun, wheat is ripening, we are trampling the fields, the harvest is poor, the grain is undersized, there are many Czech, German and Polish colonies. Other people, well-being, cleanliness, magnificent gardens, we eat unripe apples and pears, everyone wants to stay with foreigners,

I catch myself on this desire, foreigners are intimidated. The Jewish cemetery behind Malin, hundreds of years old, the stones fell down, almost all of the same shape, oval on top, the cemetery was overgrown with grass, it saw Khmelnitsky, now Budyonny, the unfortunate Jewish population, everything repeats itself, now this story - Poles - Cossacks -

Jews - with amazing accuracy repeats itself, the new is communism.

The entry dated July 20 well conveys the psychology of the Budennovsky army: "On halts with Cossacks, hay for horses, everyone has a long history - Denikin, their farms, their leaders, Budyonny and Books, campaigns of 200 people, robber raids, rich Cossack freemen, how many

they read, but how weakly the names fall, how easy it is to turn everything around. Great camaraderie, solidarity, love for horses, /4 days, endless
1 horse takes exchanges and conversations. Role and
horse life. Completely different attitude towards management.
- just, on you.

Budyonny was able to become related to this organization, but many others did not, and died. It was also important that Semyon Mikhailovich knew and loved horses very well. This made him even more related to the Cossacks. He was completely akin to the spirit of the Cossack freemen, felt it, understood when it was necessary to let go of the reins, to allow the cavalrymen to "relax", and when it was necessary to restore order with an iron hand, not stopping before executions, otherwise the elements would sweep you away too. Babel was a stranger in

this environment. He admitted to himself in an entry dated July 26: "The life of our division. About Bakhturov, about the commander, about the Cossacks, looting, the vanguard of the vanguard. I am a stranger." The massacres of the Budennovites with prisoners only encouraged the Poles to resist even more fiercely. On July 28, Babel notes: "History - how the Polish regiment laid down its weapons four times and defended itself again when they began to chop it down." The passion of Budyonny residents for wine cellars has not disappeared anywhere in Galicia. On July 28, Babel recorded: "The ruined economy, master Sveshnikov, the broken majestic winery (a symbol of the Russian master?), When alcohol was released, all the troops got drunk." Babel left us a wonderful characterization of Khmelnitsky, Voroshilov's adjutant of many years: "Comrade. Khmelnitsky is a Jew, a zhrun, a coward, impudent, under the commander - a chicken, a pig, corn, he is despised by the orderlies, impudent orderlies, the only concern of the orderlies is chicken, bacon, they eat, fat, drivers eat bacon - everything is on the porch in front of the house. The horse has nothing to eat. At the same time, the writer always spoke of Budyonny himself with respect. For example, in the same entry dated August 4: "The mood is completely different, the Poles are retreating, although Brody is occupied by them, we are beating again, Budyonny has taken them out." And here is a colorful sketch of one of the cavalrymen: "Ivan Ivanovich, sitting on a bench, talks about the days when he spent 20 thousand, 30 thousand. Everyone has gold, everyone scored in Rostov,

threw a bag of money over the saddle and went. Ivan Ivanovich dressed and kept women. Night, kluna, fragrant hay, but the air is heavy, I am crushed by something, by the sad thoughtlessness of my life.

And the next day, August 7, Babel records the looting of the church in Berestechko: "A terrible event - the looting of the church, the vestments are being torn, the precious shining fabrics are torn, on the floor, the sister of mercy has dragged away three bales, the lining is being torn, the candles have been taken away, the boxes have been broken, the bulls have been thrown out, the money is taken away, the magnificent temple - 200 years old, what he saw (Tuzinkevich's manuscripts), how many counts and serfs, magnificent Italian painting, pink pateri rocking the baby Christ, magnificent dark Christ, Rembrandt, Madonna under Murillo, or maybe Murillo, and the main thing is these holy, well-fed Jesuits, a terrible Chinese figure behind a veil, in a crimson kuntush, a bearded Jew, a shop, a broken reliquary, the figure of St. Valens. The attendant trembles like a bird, writhing; interferes with Russian speech with Polish, I can't touch, sobs. Beast, they came to plunder, it's so clear, the old gods are being destroyed." Quite often Babel fixes reprisals against prisoners. For example, in this laconic entry dated August 17: "Fights near the railway, near Lisok. Cutting of prisoners. A more impressive picture of the reprisals against prisoners near Lvov is given in the entry dated August 18: "Hurrah thunders, the Poles are crushed, we are going to the battlefield, a little Pole with polished nails rubs his pink head with sparse hair, answers evasively, wagging, "mekaya", well, yes, Sheko, inspired and pale, answer who you are - I hesitate - like an ensign, we drive off, they lead him on, a guy with a good face behind him charges, I shout - Yakov Vasilyevich! He pretends not to hear, rides on, a shot, a Pole in underpants falls on his face and twitches. Life is disgusting, murderers, unbearable, meanness and crime. Prisoners are driven, they are undressed, a strange picture - they undress terribly quickly, shake their heads, all this in the sun, a little awkwardness, right the

through your fingers. I will not forget this "like" ensign,
treacherously killed.

There are terrible things ahead. We crossed the railway at
Zadvurdze. The Poles make their way along the railway line to Lvov.
Attack in the evening at the farm. Massacre. We go with the military
commissar along the line, we beg you not to cut down the prisoners,
Apanasenko washes his hands. Sheko mentioned - to cut, it played
a terrible role. I didn't look at the faces, they pinned, shot, the corpses
were covered with bodies, one was undressed, the other was shot,
groans, screams, wheezing, our squadron made the attack,
Apanasenko aside, the squadron dressed properly, Matusevich's horse
was killed, he is with a terrible, dirty face, running, looking for a
horse. Hell. How we bring freedom is terrible. They search the farm, pull
out, Apanasenko - do not waste cartridges, slaughter. Apanasenko
always says - kill your sister,

kill the Poles. Another entry on the same day conveys all the
bitterness of the battles for Lvov: "Fights for Barszowice. After a day of
hesitation, towards evening, the Poles make their way to Lvov in
columns. Apanasenko saw and went crazy, he trembles, the brigades
act on everyone, although they are dealing with the retreating,
and the brigades are drawn out with endless ribbons, 3 cavalry brigades
are thrown into the attack, Apanasenko triumphs, chuckles, lets in a new
brigade commander 3 Litovchenko, instead of the wounded
Kolesnikov, you see, here they, go and destroy, they run, correct the
actions of artillery, interfere with the orders of the battery commanders,
feverish expectation, they thought to repeat the story under Zadvurdze,
did not work out. Swamp on one side, destructive fire on the other.

Movement to the Island, the 6th Cavalry

Division should take Lvov from the southeast side. Colossal losses in
the command staff: Korochoev was seriously wounded, his assistant
was killed - a Jew was killed, the head of the 34th regiment was
wounded, the entire commissar staff of the 31st
regiment was out of order, all the nastabrigs were wounded, the
Budyonovsky chiefs were ahead. The wounded crawl on carts. So
we take Lvov, reports to the commander are written on the grass, the
brigades jump, orders at night, again forests, bullets buzz, we are driven
from place to place by artillery fire, a dreary fear of airplanes, we dismount, there will be

Apanasenko's visits with his retinue to Budyonny. Budyonny and Voroshilov on the farm, sitting at the table. Apanasenko's report, stretched out. The failure of a special regiment - they planned a raid on Lvov, went out, in a special regiment, the outposts, as always, were asleep, they removed it, the Poles rolled up a machine gun 100 steps, caught horses, injured half of the regiment ... Advance to Lvov. The batteries are getting closer. Unsuccessful battle near Ostrov, but still the Poles leave. Information about the defense of Lvov - professors, women, teenagers. Apanasenko will cut them - he hates the intelligentsia, it's deep, he wants an aristocratic in his own way, a peasant,

Cossack state. On August 21, already during the retreat from Lvov, Babel had a characteristic conversation with one of the cavalymen: "A conversation with Maximov's command division, our army is going to earn money, not a revolution, but an uprising of wild freemen." The Cavalry was now marching on Lublin, in the Polish lands proper, and on this occasion the following entry in Babel's diary is noteworthy: "The soldiers are satisfied. In Poland, where we are going, you don't have to be shy, you should have been more careful with the Galicians, who were not guilty of anything ...

"So we can say that in Galicia the Budennovites behaved decently, but in Poland they expected to turn around for real. Neither Babel nor the overwhelming majority of the fighters and commanders of the First Cavalry knew anything about the defeat near Warsaw. On August 28, Babel captured the arrival of Budyonny and Voroshilov at Apanasenko's headquarters and the dressing they gave to the division commander of the 6th division: "The arrival of Voroshilov and Budyonny. Voroshilov spreads in front of everyone, lack of energy, gets excited, hot man, wandered the whole army, rides and shouts, Budyonny is silent, smiles, white teeth. Apanasenko defends himself, let's go into the apartment, why is he screaming, let the enemy out, there is no contact, no blow. It is striking that only Kliment Efremovich gets excited and swears in this scene, while Semyon Mikhailovich is emphatically calm. I think that this calmness also affected the fate of Budyonny. His career, of course, was not as brilli

reached, yes, to tell the truth, he did not aspire to them. But Budyonny did not know such dramatic falls as Voroshilov. Among the crushing falls of Kliment Efremovich can be attributed to the removal from the post of People's Commissar of Defense after the unsuccessful war with Finland, and the removal from command of the troops in the final period of the Great Patriotic War, and the post-war disgrace, when Stalin did not allow Voroshilov to the Politburo meeting, called him an English spy and obviously prepared a brutal reprisal against the "Lugansk locksmith Klim", which was prevented only by the sudden death of the leader. One can also recall the inglorious participation of Voroshilov in the "anti-party group" of 1957. True, then he managed to "change milestones" and go over to Khrushchev. For this, Kliment Efremovich was kept for another three years in the honorary position of Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, but his political influence fell to zero. Semyon Mikhailovich did not aspire to the first roles in the military department at all, but quite successfully moved up the career ladder in the 20s and 30s. During the Great Patriotic War, the leadership tried to use the authority of Budyonny among the Red Army masses and appointed him to command the fronts and strategic directions, but it soon became clear that Semyon Mikhailovich was not suitable for the conditions of a modern war, at least the one waged by Stalin. In the future, he held only honorary, but insignificant posts. And he wasn't upset about it at all. Contrary to modern legends, Babel showed in his diary that the Reds and the Whites were equally pogroms and perpetrators of violence. Here is the entry from August 28: "They tell me. Secretly in the hut, they are afraid that the Poles will not return. Yesaul Yakovlev's Cossacks were here yesterday (allies of the Poles; the brigade was largely recruited from defectors from the Cavalry. - **B.S.**). Pogrom. The family of David Zis, in apartments, a naked, barely breathing old prophet, a hacked old woman, a child with severed fingers, many are still breathing, a stinking smell of blood, everything is turned upside down, chaos, a r

dirt, blood under the black beard, so they lie in the blood. Jews in the square, an exhausted Jew showing me everything, he is replaced by a tall Jew. The rabbi hid, everything was ruined, he did not get out of the hole until the evening. 15 people were killed - Khusid Itzka Galer - 70 years old, David Zis - an acolyte in the synagogue - 45 years old, his wife and daughter - 15 years old, David Trost, his wife - a butcher. At the raped ... The moon, behind the doors, their life is at night. Howling beyond the walls. They will kill. Fear and horror of the population. The main thing is that our people walk around indifferently and rob wherever possible, rip off the hacked. The hatred is the same, the Cossacks are the same, the cruelty is the same, the armies are different, what nonsense. Township life. There is no salvation. Everyone is ruining - the Poles did not give shelter. All the girls and women can hardly walk. In the evening - a talkative Jew with a beard, had a shop, the daughter rushed from the Cossack from the second floor, broke her arms,

There are many of those".

And then another massacre of the prisoners follows: "They took the station. We're going to the railroad track. 10 prisoners, we do not have time to save one. Revolver wound? An officer. Blood comes from the mouth. Thick red blood in clods, fills the whole face, it is terrible, red, covered with a thick layer of blood. The prisoners are all undressed. The squadron commander has his pants thrown over the saddle. Sheko forces to give. The prisoners are dressed, nothing is dressed. Officer's cap. "There were nine of them." Around them dirty words. They want to kill. A bald, limping Jew in underpants, not keeping up with the horse, a terrible face, probably an officer, bothers everyone, cannot walk, they are all in animal fear, miserable, unhappy people, Polish proletarians, another Pole - stately, calm, with sideburns, in knitted jersey, behaves with dignity, everyone is trying to find out if he is an officer. They want to be cut. A storm is gathering over the Jew. A frantic Putilov worker, they need to be cut down by reptiles, a Jew jumps after us, we drag prisoners with us all the time, then we give responsibility to the escorts. What will happen to them. The fury of the Putilov worker, foam splashes, a checker, I will chop the bastards and I will not answer. On August 31, Babel recorded in his diary an unsuccessful attack by units of the 6th Cavalry Division on the brigade of Yesaul Yakovlev near Chesnikov, and

Budyonny and Voroshilov personally led the attack: "Armorder to leave Zamostye, go to the rescue of the 14th division, pressed from Komarov. The place is again occupied by the Poles. Unfortunate Komarov. Riding on flanks and brigades. Before us is the enemy cavalry - expanse, whom to cut, if not them, the Cossacks of Yesaul Yakovlev. An attack is coming. Brigades are accumulating in the forest - 2 versts from Chesnica. Voroshilov and Budyonny are with us all the time. Voroshilov, short, graying, in red trousers with silver stripes, hurries all the time, irritates, urges Apanasenko on why the 2nd brigade does not come up. We are waiting for the approach of the 2nd brigade. Time drags on painfully long. Do not rush me, Comrade Voroshilov. Voroshilov - everything died by EM.

Budyonny is silent, sometimes he smiles, showing dazzling white teeth. We must first let the brigade, then the regiment.

Voroshilov is impatient, he lets everyone who is at hand attack. The regiment passes in front of Voroshilov and Budyonny.

Voroshilov pulled out a huge revolver, to show no mercy to the gentlemen, the exclamation is accepted with pleasure. The regiment takes off out of order, cheers, you give, one jumps, the other delays, the third trot, the horses do not go, bowlers and carpets. Our squadron is on the attack. We gallop for four versts. They are waiting for us in columns on the hill. Miraculously, no one moved. Endurance, discipline.

An officer with a black beard. I'm under bullets. My feelings.

Escape. The military commissars are turning around. Nothing helps.

Luckily they don't follow, otherwise it would be a disaster. They try to assemble a brigade for the second attack, but nothing happens.

Manuilov is

threatened with revolvers. Sister heroines. We're going back.

Sheko's horse is wounded, he is shell-shocked, his terrible petrified face. He does not understand

anything, he cries, we lead the horse. She bleeds. The story of the sister - there are sisters who only arrange sympathy, we help the fighter, all the hardships are with him, I would shoot

at such, but what will you shoot with, h ... m, and even that is

not. The commanders are suppressed, the formidable ghosts of the decay of the army. Cheerful foolish Vorobyov, tells about

his exploits, jumped up, 4 shots at close range. Apanasenko suddenly turns around, y

Apanasenko is gloomy, Sheko is pathetic. Talk about the fact that the army is not the same, it's time to rest. What's next. We spend the night in Chesniki - frozen, tired, silent, impassable, sucking mud, autumn, broken roads, melancholy. Gloomy prospects lie ahead. The next day it became clear that the First Cavalry had lost the battle for Zamoÿÿ. Babel testifies: "We leave Chesnica at night. They stayed for two hours. Night, cold, on horseback. Shaking. Armed order - retreat, we are surrounded, lost contact with the 12th Army, communication with no one. Sheko is crying, her head is shaking, the face of an offended child, pitiful, broken. People are boors. Vinokurov did not let him read the arm order - he was out of work. Apanasenko reluctantly gives a carriage, I'm not a driver for them. Endless talk about yesterday's attack, lies, sincere regret, the fighters are silent. Fool Vorobyov is calling. He was interrupted by the chief. The beginning of the end of the 1st Cavalry. Talk about retreat. It is curious how Budyonny himself described the same attack on the Yakovlevites in his memoirs (of course, together with his literary colleagues): "We assigned the 6th division to the strike in the direction of Chesniki, Nevirkov, Kotlice and the release of these points from the enemy. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the division approached Chesniki, occupied by uhlans. Attacking in the equestrian formation, the 2nd and 3rd brigades drove the enemy cavalry back. But further, continuing the offensive, in the forest in front of Nevirkov, they came under artillery fire. Shells fell thickly, felled trees, raised fountains of mud. I had to take the horses to a safe place, and attack Nevirkov on foot. The enemy resisted with desperate determination, the machine guns mounted on the roofs caused great damage to the cavalymen. Two attacks failed. Only when the village was in a semicircle did the Belopolsky infantry retreat to the south. Semyon Mikhailovich Yakovlev's brigade, whom he forced to shoot himself a few pages earlier after its defeat, preferred to replace it with Polish lancers, and turn an unsuccessful cavalry attack into a common victory. True, he nevertheless admitted that the Cavalry was forced to start a retreat: "Fierce battles on August 30 and 31 brought heavy losses and exhausted the Cava

tired, that literally fell off their feet. The convoys were overflowing with the wounded, the ammunition was running out, there were no medicines and dressings left at all. Under such conditions, to continue the offensive against Krasnostav-Lublin against superior enemy forces meant dooming the Cavalry to certain death. The situation imperiously demanded that she be taken to join the troops of the Western Front. And the Revolutionary Military Council gave the order from the morning of September 1 to begin a withdrawal in the general direction of Grubeshov. On September 2, Babel noted the already open decomposition of the Cavalry: "We are pushing, but we are not holding success. Rumors about the weakening of the combat capability of the army are increasing. Escape from the army. Mass reports about vacations, illnesses. The main sore of the division is the lack of command staff, all the commanders are soldiers, Apanasenko hates the democrats, they don't understand anything, there is no one to lead the regiment on the attack. Squadrons command regiments. Days of apathy, Sheko recovers but is depressed. It's hard to live in the atmosphere of an army that has cracked... The Pole is slowly but surely pushing us out. The head of the division is no good, neither the initiative nor the necessary perseverance. His purulent ambition, womanly love, gluttony and, probably, feverish activity, if necessary. And a similar entry on September 3–5: "The enemy is advancing. We took Lots, we give him away, he wrings us out, not a single offensive of ours succeeds, we send wagon trains, I go to Terebin on Barsukov's cart, then - rain, slush, longing, we cross the Bug, Budyatichi. So, it was decided to give up the Bug line." The next day, in Budyatichi, it came to clashes between the horsemen and the fighters of the 44th Soviet rifle division, who occupied the place. Babel described it this way: "Budyatichi is occupied by the 44th division. Collisions. They are overwhelmed by the wild horde that pounces on them. Orlov - surrender, roll. The proud, stupid, beautiful sister is crying, the doctor is outraged that they are shouting - beat the Jews, save Russia. They are stunned, the nachkhoz was beaten with a whip, the infirmary is thrown out, the pigs are requisitioned and dragged without any consideration, but they have order, all sorts of representatives with complaints from Sheko. Here are the

At the same time, Babel noticed that other Soviet troops were also decaying and, in any case, fighting even worse than the Cavalry. On September 12, in Kivertsy, he wrote: "In the morning there was a panic at the station. Artillery. Poles in the city. An unimaginable pitiful flight, carts in five rows, miserable, dirty, suffocating infantry, cavemen, running through the meadows, throwing their rifles, orderly Borodin sees the Poles already chopping. The train leaves quickly, the soldiers and carts run, the wounded with distorted faces jump into our car, the political worker, panting, whose pants have fallen, a Jew with a thin, translucent face, maybe a sly Jew, deserters jump up with broken arms, sick

from the sanlettuka. An institution called the 12th Army. For one fighter - 4 rear, 2 ladies, 2 chests with things, and this only fighter does not fight. The Twelfth Army is destroying the front and the Cavalry, opening up our flanks, forcing us to plug all the holes with it. They surrendered, opened the front, the Ural regiment or the Bashkir brigade. The panic is shameful, the army is not combat-ready. Soldier types. Russian Red Army infantryman - barefoot, not only not modernized, completely "wretched Rus", wanderers, swollen, shoddy, undersized, hungry men. In Goloby, all the sick and wounded and deserters are thrown out. Rumors, and then facts: the Volynsky dead end, the supply of the 1st Cavalry was captured, driven into Vladimir, our headquarters moved to Lutsk, a lot of

prisoners and property were captured from the 12th Army, the army is fleeing. The surviving part of Babel's diary ends on September 15, just on the eve of the most terrible Jewish pogroms perpetrated by the Cavalry during the retreat from the Polish front and the subsequent transition to the Wrangel front. At the same time, the 6th Cavalry Division, in which Babel served, especially distinguished itself. Budyonny, of course, did not read Babel's cavalry diary, since it was found and published after the marshal's death. But even the Babel Cavalry, where the Budyonnovists were by no means presented in full dress, drove Semyon Mikhailovich into a real frenzy, and he retained his hatred

stars ", General Mikhail Loshchits recalled how in 1967 Budyonny, in response to a message that everyone really liked the film with his participation, "talked about the fact that it was time to create a big feature film about the Cavalry. There are rumors, the marshal noted, that the French are preparing such a film, and no matter how the story with War and Peace repeats itself - first they, and then we. It was also about what they say and write about the First Cavalry Army, and then Budyonny remarked with irritation that the writer Babel, who was already greatly extolled, distorted the appearance of the Cavalry. "I don't know him, this Babel, although he pretends to be a horseman. At one time, it seems, he sold newspapers with us. Babel, I tell you, was supported at one time by Maxim Gorky, after which we began a rather frank, high-pitched correspondence. According to Babel, it turned out that for the most part criminals, syphilitics and lascivious women served in the cavalry. In his understanding, a cavalryman is some kind of sadist. And so I ask A. M. Gorky, how could you, a wonderful proletarian writer, positively evaluate such writings, which are outraged by everyone who served in the First Cavalry. Perhaps they were praised without reading Babel first. And why not do what Leo Tolstoy did, who, before releasing something to the public, returned to what he had written five or six times, rethought it and even rewrote it. To this Gorky replied that he was Gorky, not Tolstoy. I wrote something abusive to him again ... "About the correspondence with Gorky," Semyon Mikhailovich continued to share with me, "I once told Stalin, I wanted to know his opinion. Stalin said that I was right in criticizing Maxim Gorky, but, he added, the point is that the moment for such a skirmish is not quite right: we are fighting for Gorky, we want him to be completely on our side. Well, what is it like for him to receive evil letters now, and even from whom - from Budyonny himself? I thought about what Iosif Vissarionovich said and decided not to write to Gorky anymore. - You still did not find a common lan

- No, why, then we met more than once and even kissed somehow. I remember he said: "Let's agree not to carry on this correspondence anymore, otherwise there will be some third force, and it will take advantage of our dispute." "I agree," I replied. "Let historians judge us." S. M.

Budyonny spoke further about the First Cavalry Army. - It was a great and formidable force, and if all sorts of dregs of society really served in it, as Babel portrayed it, it would not be the same as we and our enemies knew it. Denikin, in his volumes Essays on Russian Troubles, admitted that he was afraid of Budyonny, that Budyonny had beaten him. I do not agree with Denikin, the leader of the "white cause", who rushed to Moscow, captured Orel, approached Tula, although what he writes about is flattering to me. I was not the only one, but the entire Red Army smashed and smashed him because the ground was burning under his feet, and the Cavalry only helped to burn him faster. And not only the Cavalry defeated him, but all our people, who had risen to fight for a free life. Our army was voluntary, and he, like Kolchak and others like him, recruited his army by force. Cavalry defeated a total of 20 enemy corps. If there are 15 thousand people in each building, estimate how many will be typed

in total. The discussion about Cavalry began immediately after the publication of Babel's stories in the Krasnaya Nov magazine.

In the third issue of the magazine "October" for 1924, Budyonny published a short note under the heading: "Babism of Babel from Krasnaya Nov.". The author was outraged that the magazine allowed the "degenerate from literature" Babel to "spit the tar of class hatred" on the 1st Cavalry Red Army: "Under the loud, obviously speculative title" From the Cavalry Book, "the unlucky author tried to depict life, way of life, traditions 1 th Cavalry Army in the difficult time of its heroic struggle on the Polish and other fronts. In order to describe the heroic class struggle, unprecedented in the history of mankind, one must first of all understand the essence of this struggle and the nature of classes, that is, to be a dialectician, to be a Marxist artist. The author has neither one nor the other ... Citizen

Babel tells us women's gossip about the Red Army; he invents fables, throws mud at the best communist commanders, fantasizes and simply lies ... Does the editor really love stinking Babel-Babel piquancy so much that he allows irresponsible fables to be printed in such a responsible magazine? Babel, in turn offended, called Budyonny's formidable letter "full of fetid ignorance and non-commissioned officer Marxism." A colleague in the writer's shop was supported by Gorky, who pointed out that Budyonny "has entered literature on a horse and criticizes it from the height of a horse." "Comrade Budyonny cursed Babel's Cavalry," he wrote in Pravda. - It seems to me that this was done in vain: Comrade Budyonny himself loves to decorate from the outside not only his fighters, but also horses. Babel adorned his fighters from the inside, and, in my opinion, better, more truthful than the Gogol of the Cossacks. Budyonny, in the same aggressive style, already answered Gorky: "From the super-arrogant Babel slander, the Cavalry Army literally reared up." On October 26, 1928, he appeared in the Pravda newspaper with an open letter to Gorky: "Babel fantasizes and simply lies. The plot of his essays, richly filled with the impressions of an erotomaniac author, is the delirium of a crazy Jew. Gorky's answer appeared the very next day. The writer advised Budyonny not to judge literature from the height of his horse, because "for correct and useful criticism, it is necessary that the critic be either culturally superior to the writer, or at least on the same level of culture with him." And he warned the commander: "You can physically destroy him (Babel), inciting your fighters against a man whose weapon is only a pen." The editors gently advised Gorky to soften his tone so as not to cast a shadow on the legendary hero of the Civil War. In the published version, the "petrel of the revolution" emphasized that there was nothing "caricature-libelous" in Babel's book. That she exalts rather than humiliates the valiant fighters of the Cavalry

army. Gorky claimed: "I don't know such a colorful and lively image of individual fighters, which would give me a clear idea of the psyche of the entire team, the entire mass of the Cavalry and help me understand the force that allowed her to make her historical, amazing campaign, - I don't know in Russian

literature ". After that, the controversy between Budyonny and Gorky about the Cavalry stopped. Stalin advised Semyon Mikhailovich not to make any more noise, so as not to offend Alexei Maksimovich, for whose soul and pen there was a serious struggle. However, discussions were continued by others. In 1930, Vsevolod Vishnevsky, an "ordinary Budyonnovist", sent Gorky his play "The First Cavalry", wrote: "Babel's misfortune is that he is not a fighter. He was amazed and frightened when he came to us, and this strangely painful impression of an intellectual from us was reflected in his Cavalry. Budyonny could be offended and indignant. We, former ordinary fighters, too. Not that gave Babel! Didn't see much. He gave only a piece: Cavalry, exhausted in the battles on the Polish front. And even then not all of it, but fragments. Believe the fighter - our Cavalry was not like that, as Babel showed. Babel himself told Dmitry Furmanov: "What I saw at Budyonny, I gave. I see that I didn't give a political worker there at all, I didn't give much at all about the Red Army, I'll give more, if I can." After the May holiday of 1932, Budyonny received an invitation from Gorky.

They met on Red Square. Budyonny admitted: - I, Alexei Maksimovich, really liked Vishnevsky's play "The First Horse". Truly written. "Yes, it turned out to be a good thing," agreed Gorky. - Your fighter fought well and truthfully portrayed in his play. "But I am dissatisfied with Babel's Cavalry," Budyonny complained. - Many commanders and political workers of the First Cavalry did not like this book. Babel could not, did not have the right to remain silent about the fact that the Cavalry is the army of the revolution, and its fighters are the faithful sons of the Soviet Republic (but Babel showed exactly this: the Budyonnovists are the faithful sons of the Soviet power, the revolution).

As soon as Babel's stories appeared in the press, letters of sharp protest began to come to the Revolutionary Military Council of the republic, the editorial offices of central newspapers, and to me personally. The letters said that the author untruthfully covered the life of the cavalymen, deliberately generalizing private shortcomings in the Red Army. And Budyonny solemnly handed over to Gorky "Minutes No. 1 of the general meeting of the command and political staff of the 1st Special Cavalry Brigade", which took place on January 4, 1925 in Moscow, in the barracks on Khodynka. The meeting unanimously decided that "Babel's stories about the Cavalry are a libel against the 1st Cavalry Army. There is not a single positive fighter or commander in the stories that others would imitate. Babel, undertaking to write about the Cavalry, could not, had no right to remain silent about the fact that this army is the army of the revolution, and its fighters are true sons of the Soviet Republic, freedom and independence are dear to them, so they resolutely crushed the enemy ... "Well, and Semyon Mikhailovich and Alexei Maksimovich knew well how such "outbursts of popular anger" are organized. Of course, the fighters and commanders of the 1st Special Cavalry Brigade could not simply gather for a rally. In the army, as you know, everything is done by order. And the order from above was lowered by the same Budyonny, as an assistant to the commander-in-chief for cavalry. Moreover, exactly the same meetings with carbon-copied resolutions were held in other cavalry units. In the preface to Vishnevsky's play, Budyonny wrote: "... Only the machine gunner Vishnevsky, a fighter of the First Cavalry, one of the mighty team of its heroes, was able to create this thing - the cavalry ... The fighter spoke about the fighters, the hero - about the heroes, the cavalryman - about the cavalry." Later, Vishnevsky reported to Budyonny on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the latter: "He brought the memory of all the battles, of the commander to this day, and wrote" The First Cavalry. Semyon Mikhailovich, in case, command:

"On the horses!" - and ten times more will come to the Cavalry than before. Years do not interfere with chopping!" Gorky, as a true diplomat from literature, subtly feeling the political situation, found it necessary to praise

Vishnevsky. And also to establish relations with Budyonny. Regarding The First Cavalry, Aleksey Maksimovich wrote to the author: "You wrote a good thing ... and it is good precisely because it is written in an elevated, heroic "tone ..." Aleksey Maksimovich invited Budyonny in 1934 to speak in the newly created Writers' Union. After the performance, he shook the guest's hand: "You know how to speak. Brightly, in a folk way, with humor. Some of our writers just lack simplicity

language."

Life has put everything in its place. Vishnevsky's play has long been forgotten, and Babel's stories are being reprinted and read even today. Odessa Savva Golovanivsky recalled: "When it was my turn to shake Babel's hand in parting, the devil pulled me to ask: "Is it true that Budyonny was chasing you around

the table with a saber? No one laughed - apparently, everyone was interested in this. The fact is that shortly before this, an article by M. Gorky appeared, in which the great writer defended Babel's Cavalry from the attacks of the great cavalryman. All of Odessa was talking about a funny episode that allegedly took place at some big reception, where Budyonny, having met the author of Cavalry, allegedly intended to wash away the slander on his fighters with the blood of a writer. Apparently, Babel was already tired of being asked questions about this, most likely, invented story, but he did not get angry and answered evasively: - I think that in this case he had no intention of executing me. And, having already left the table, he added:

- If you want to check whether he acted recklessly, come to tomorrow evening: I

will read. Of course, you didn't order the

box benoir? Many contemporaries recall the story with the saber in their memoirs, but no one conveys the exact details. This is an obvious fiction - Budyonny always

treated the workers of the pen with respect. And he didn't hold a grudge against Babel, speaking about him quite good-naturedly. This was reflected in a joke that was already circulating in the 1920s: "Semyon Mikhailovich, do you like Babel?" - "Well, it depends on what kind of babel ...".

Budyonny's daughter Nina conveys the story of her father's quarrel with Babel in this way: "Yes, everything is nonsense with Babel ... Where did he see this Scythian? The fuss began with the fact that in the first version of Cavalry, in four chapters published in Krasnaya Nov, Babel gave his characters the names of real people. So they all got angry: dad was bombarded with decisions of the party meetings of the regiments condemning Babel. The veterans of the First Cavalry blissed out how much in vain - so dad entered into a controversy with Gorky, who defended Babel. But that was in the late twenties, and Babel was arrested and shot ten years later, his death had nothing to do with their dispute. Firstly, he did not have to take Yezhov's wife as his mistress. And secondly, he himself was assigned to Horse from the Cheka.

His whole company was KGB, he opened the door in the NKVD with his left foot. Babel was friends with the wonderful Moscow Art Theater actor Boris Livanov. He was frank with him, and the Lebanese son Vasya, the future television Sherlock Holmes, carefully listened to the conversations of adults. Later, he told me about them: Babel said about the Chekist from the Cavalry - "it's me." My father was friends with Lev Sheinin, a writer and former NKVD member, a knowledgeable

person, and he also confirmed that Babel could not do without a check. Budyonny took up arms against the Babel Cavalry in such a way also because he knew in the depths of his soul that the Polish campaign was the most unsuccessful in the history of the First Cavalry. She did not defeat such a number of enemy troops as in the fight against Krasnov, Denikin and Wrangel, it cannot be said that she took a large number of prisoners and trophies (there were much more of this in the war with compatriots), they did not take possession of Lviv, they suffered under Zamosc clear defeat. And most of the other battles with the Poles ended in a draw at best. And then

there's Babel, with his talented pen, poured salt on the commander's wounds ... The reason that the Cavalry did not fight very successfully against the Poles was that the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 largely took place in different conditions than the Civil War in Russia. The den

battles of the Red Army with Kolchak and Denikin. Trenches and barbed wire played a much greater role. This brought the Soviet-Polish war closer to the First World War, in which the cavalry in the main theaters had nowhere to turn around. The main thing was that the Polish army, inspired by the national idea, was much more united and combat-ready than the white formations that opposed the Budyonovists before. It can be said that the Soviet-Polish war was much more like the wars of the future (with all the limited use of aviation, tanks and armored cars in 1920). And the defeat in this war predicted the decline of the red cavalry, which, in general, did not have a worthy place in the new world war. But Budyonny did not want and could not come to terms with this. He did not see himself otherwise than on horseback, with a saber, at the head of loyal cavalymen. And for many more years he could not understand that his era had already ended and the finest hours were in the distant past.

Chapter Six

AGAINST THE "BLACK BARON"

Ahead was the last formidable enemy - Wrangel. But the First Cavalry approached the fight against him far from being in the best condition. Fatigue from almost uninterrupted fighting for three and a half months and moral depression from the failures of recent weeks had an effect. As Zilist, an authorized representative of the Revolutionary Military Council, told Lenin, during the retreat from Zamostye, "the 1st Cavalry Army and the 6th division destroyed the Jewish population on their way, robbing and killing on their way ... The 44th division also did not lag behind." Cavalymen of the 6th division, commanded by I. R. Apanasenko, stabbed to death the military commissar G. G. Shepelev, who was trying to prevent the pogroms. The three most decomposed regiments had to be disarmed, and several dozen instigators had to be shot in front of the formation of the 6th Cavalry Division, one of whose brigades was disbanded as a punishment. On September 19, 1920, Tukhachevsky ordered the first cavalry, badly battered near Zan

Kremenchug for rest and subsequent actions as part of the Southern Front against Wrangel. Peace talks were already underway with Poland. In addition, at the moment the Cavalry was actually unfit for action and was still not suitable for operations against the Poles. Voroshilov in September gave instructions to commanders and commissars: "The situation with allowances and fodder is bad and we have to take it from the population. Therefore, the Cavalry is forced to self-supply, is forced to carry out the necessary "robbery". "Self-supply" and legalized robbery, as the sad experience of Rostov showed, sooner or later had to end badly. And on

September 21, 1920, a telegram came to Budyonny: "In Rogachev, during an overnight stay, units of the 14th Cavalry Division killed 27 policemen and dispersed the Soviet. On the same night, some squadron of the 6th division attacked the location of the administrative headquarters of the 11th cavalry division, where they committed a pogrom. A little later, a message followed, intended "exclusively for Voroshilov and Budyonny": "In the 6th division, utter disintegration has recently been felt. Thus, for example, a picture of the Makhnovshchina emerges. In the 66th and 65th regiments, when faced with them, one often hears cries: "Beat the Jews, communists and commissars. Long live Father Makhno."

On September 24, Budyonny received a directive from the Commander-in-Chief of the Red Army demanding to speed up work on restoring the combat capability of the Cavalry in order to quickly transfer it to the Berdichev region and further to the Kremenchug-Yelisavetgrad region for operations against Wrangel. S. S. Kamenev emphasized: "I express my firm confidence that the army will be imbued with the seriousness of the task assigned to it and in the shortest possible time, moving south, will approach the new enemy in a state of that power and combat readiness with which it began the victorious struggle against the Poles in the summer ". However, the cavalrymen did not even think to be imbued with the seriousness of the new task. They thought more about how to rob, seize everything that is bad, and "feel the Jews." The fighting capacity at that moment in the Cavalry

unruly gang. Budyonny understood that urgent measures had to be taken, otherwise the army and himself could suffer the sad fate of Boris Dumenko's corps. Already on September 24, on the day of receiving the directive of the commander-in-chief, a group of soldiers of the 6th Cavalry Division was arrested for looting, but was immediately released by their comrades, who dispersed the divisional revolutionary tribunal. The pogrom at Ershi station could only be stopped by the personal intervention of Budyonny and Voroshilov, who happened to be there along with the train of the Revolutionary Military Council. On September 27, for an attempt to arrest two fighters who committed theft, the fighters of the 33rd cavalry regiment beat the military commissar Misin. And on September 28, the riots reached their climax - on this day, the commissar of the 6th division, Georgy Shepelev, died at the hands of the cavalymen. He tried to restore order in the compound and demanded that revolutionary discipline be observed, he personally shot one of the marauders, but was literally crumbled with checkers. A

week later, the 1st brigade of the 6th division, which had killed the commissar, called on the 2nd brigade to go to the rear and restore order there - "cleanse the Jews and the commissars." Here is what his secretary Hagan reported on the circumstances of Shepelev's death on September 29, 1920: Shepelev remained in Polonnoy in order to expel the stragglers of the Red Army from the town and stop the robberies of the civilian population. A verst from Polonny there is a new place, the center of which is inhabited exclusively by Jews ... When we arrived there, screams were almost heard from every house. Entering one of the houses, in front of which two saddled horses stood, we found an old man, about 60 years old, an old woman and a son on the floor, terribly mutilated by blows from broadswords, and opposite a wounded man lay on the bed. Right there in the house, in the next room, some Red Army soldier, accompanied by a woman who called herself a sister of mercy of the 4th squadron of the 33rd regiment, continued to load stolen property into bags. When they saw us, they ran out of the

military commissar comrade SHEPELEV killed the bandit at the scene of the crime with three shots from a revolver. The sister was arrested and, together with the horse, they led the executed man behind them. Driving further along the town, we now and then came across individuals along the street who continued to rob. Tov. SHEPELEV convincingly asked them to disperse in parts, many had bottles of moonshine in their hands, under the threat of being shot on the spot, such was taken from them and immediately poured out. When leaving the town, we met brigade commander 1 comrade. A book with a half-squadron, which, in turn, was engaged in the expulsion of bandits from the town. Tov. SHEPELEV told about everything that happened in the town and, having handed over the horse of the executed man along with the arrested sister on bail to the military commissar brigade. Romanov, went in the direction of Poleshtadiv. Before we had even driven off a hundred sazhen, a man of 100 Red Army men separated from the 31st regiment, caught up with us, jumped up to the military commissar and ripped off his weapon. At the same time, the Red Army soldiers of the 32nd regiment, which was walking ahead, began to join. We are stopped with a shout of "Here is the military commissar who wanted to shoot us in the town." A man of 10 Red Army soldiers of the same squadrons ran up, the rest gradually began to join them, leaving the ranks and demanding immediate reprisals against SHEPELEV ... At this time, Comrade drove up. BOOK, together with the arrested sister, who managed to pass on the regiment that Comrade. SHEPELEV killed the fighter. Just then the noise of the entire regiment arose, with a cry at all costs to shoot the military commissar, who kills honest fighters ... A shot from a revolver rang out, which wounded Comrade. SHEPELEVA right through the left shoulder. Comrade succeeded with difficulty. The book to snatch his wounded from a furious bunch and bring him to the first hut that came across and provide medical assistance. When Comrade. BOOK, accompanied by my military commissar and Romanov, Comrade was called. SHEPELEVA to the street to put him on a ruler, we are again surrounded by a crowd of Red Army soldiers, pushing me and the BOOK away from comrade. Shepelev, and with a second shot they mortally wounded him in the head. The corpse of the

Red Army soldiers, and at his last breath she shouted "the bastard, he is still breathing, chop him with checkers." Some tried to pull off their boots, but the military commissar of the 31st regiment stopped them, but the wallet, along with documents, including the code, was pulled out from Comrade. SHEPELEVA from his pocket. At this time, some paramedic comes up and, looking only at Comrade. SHEPELEVA, declares that comrade. SHEPELEV was in a state of intoxication... Only half an hour after his murder, we managed to put his corpse on a wagon and take him to Poleshtadiv." The commander of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, V.I. Shepelev, who said that he had shot a soldier of the 33rd Cavalry Regiment at the scene of the robbery. Having reported this, comrade. Shepelev went ahead. After some time, we also left for our units and, having caught up with those, found out that Comrade. Shepelev was arrested by the 31st cavalry regiment ... I can't indicate who exactly was the killer of the military commissar, since in such a dump it was difficult to establish who exactly shot. In all likelihood, Hagan was afraid that if he named the killers, then the fighters might do the same to him as they did to Shepelev. The military commissar of the 33rd cavalry regiment of the 6th cavalry division Misin, in turn, reported to the political department of the 6th cavalry division on October 2, 1920: we are marching in groups on foot to the place where the pogrom of the Jewish population began ... At 12 o'clock in the morning, having arrived at the headquarters of the regiment, I managed to find out from the commander and his assistant that the crowd was half drunk and in an excited state and the patrol could not cope. It was risky to send other squadrons, because their mood was uncertain. After that, the former commander of the 3rd squadron, comrade. GALKA is drunk and a crowd of 15–20 people is also in this condition, all are armed, GALKA starts yelling at the regiment commanders and hitting the floor with a rifle butt, threatening that I

I will interrupt who dares to go against me and adding: I am no longer a soldier of the Red Army, but a "bandit". The commander began to persuade him, but I did not consider it necessary to enter into explanations with the drunken crowd, which came deliberately to make a brawl, which found fault with every word ... Most of the threats were addressed to the military commissar, and they were also looking for the chairman of the commissar of the 4th squadron, comrade. KVITKA, who detained two robbers of the 3rd squadron and took away the stolen things from them, GALKa definitely shouted: I will kill KVITKA. The drunken crowd left the headquarters apartment, I, with the commander and adjutant of the regiment, went to the apartment of Nachdiv 6 (it was at 3 o'clock in the morning), asked the Nachdiv to make an order to some regiment from the division to send a unit to eliminate robberies. The division commander ordered the commander of the 34th cavalry regiment to send one squadron, but when we arrived at the apartment of the headquarters of the regiment, we learned from the Commander 34 that their situation was monotonous and the squadron did not come and the whole night there was rampant robbery and murder ... By 12 o'clock the 29th regiment was built on the eastern side of N. Place ... A bunch of throat-huggers began to ask one after another for a word ... All their speeches boiled down to this: immediate rest, expel all Jews from Soviet institutions, and some spoke from Russia altogether, and also expel all officers from Soviet institutions, to which they offered to send representatives from themselves to the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry Army ... The meeting closed, the screamers felt like winners. Our stay now is useless, because riding in the division has not done what is necessary, but everything has been done to destroy prestige

military commissars.

All the work that has been done up to now has gone down the drain only because our commanders from top to bottom have pursued and are pursuing a half-hearted policy in the sense of rehabilitating our units from dirty inclinations. We, the military commissars, are not turning into political workers, we are not becoming the fathers of units, but the gendarmes of the tsarist system. There is nothing surprising that we were beaten and continue to be killed. The leaders of robberies, pogroms of the Jewish population are still in place, in squadrons, and continue to do their

the case, and the former commander of GALKA would seem to be the commander of his old squadron, this was told to me by the commander of 33, that the Chief Division and Kombrig-2 had nothing against such an appointment. The regiment is in the worst condition: there is no discipline, orders in the sense of stopping robberies do not exist. The Jewish population is treated with hostility, terrorized and is able to terrorize at the first meeting with the Jewish population. The killers of two peasants - eight people - are in the squadron, some crowd released from arrest. While the slogans "Kill the Jews and the Communists!" remain, and some glorify

Makhno..." Voroshilov accused "the agents of the White Poles and Petlyura" of organizing the pogroms and murders. In the early 1930s, in the play The First Cavalry, playwright Vsevolod Vishnevsky, who himself once served in Budyonny's army, repeated this legend, developing and supplementing Voroshilov's thought. It turns out that even under Denikin, white officers were sent to the 6th cavalry division, who waited a long time in the wings and only during the transition to the Wrangel front first organized a Jewish pogrom, then killed the commissar and joyfully reported to the audience: "The 6th cavalry division of the Red Army is decomposed .. We did it! .." Interestingly, most viewers, at least in the 30s, took such nonsense very seriously. Another thing is that the leadership of the Revolutionary Military Council and the Politburo rightly considered explanations of this kind to be pure propaganda. In Moscow, the murder of the commissar of the 6th Cavalry Division caused serious concern.

At one time, Dumenko paid with his head for a similar crime. Of course, this time neither Budyonny, nor Voroshilov, nor even the head of the 6th division I.R. Apanasenko and the brigade commander of the most "distinguished" brigade V.I. The Central Committee of the RCP(b) sent to the First Equestrian Special Commission, which included the chairman of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee M. I. Kalinin, a member of the Politburo and one of the Bolshevik leaders, the chairman of the Moscow Council L. B. Kamenev, the commissioner of the Main and Field Headquarters of the Red Army D. I. Kursk, People's Commissar of

education A. V. Lunacharsky and secretary of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) E. A. Preobrazhensky. The decision to send the commission was made by Lenin and Trotsky on October 2, shortly after the news of Shepelev's assassination became known. Initially, it was supposed to send another leader to the location of the First Cavalry - the chairman of the Petrosoviet and a candidate member of the Politburo Zinoviev - but either because of the workload of Grigory Evseevich with Petrograd and Comintern affairs, or in order to minimize the participation of Jews in the commission and once again not to irritate cavalrymen, this idea was abandoned. Probably one of the reasons why Kamenev was sent to the Cavalry and they were going to send Zinoviev was that both Lev Borisovich and Grigory Evseevich had a reputation as outstanding orators. It was believed that with their fiery Bolshevik word they would set the fighters

on the true path, turn them away from murders, robberies and pogroms. The mood of not only ordinary cavalrymen, but also a significant part of the command staff at that moment could not be called "healthy". Here is what was said, for example, at a general meeting of all commanders and military commissars of the 6th Cavalry Division, convened on the initiative of Divisional Commander Apanasenko on October 3, on the eve of the arrival of the Moscow commission: . We, all conscious, need to unite in order to achieve victory over the enemies of the revolution once and for all. Assistant commander of the 31st Regiment Sedelnikov: "I know the soldiers of my regiment as honest defenders of the revolution, I see in all this the vile work of agents of capitalism and the dying bourgeoisie." Dyakov, Chairman of the Repair and Purchasing Commission: "Insignificant groups of bandits adhering to us discredit the honor of the division. I propose to swear that

from this day on there will be no place in our division for such elements. Following Voroshilov, the army commanders tried to blame all the pogroms and murders on the mythical "agents of Petlyura a

the commander of the Russian army once acted in concert! Doing so was much more comfortable than admitting his own fault for what had happened. On October 4, Romanov, appointed commissar of the 6th division instead of the deceased Shepelev, sent a report to the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry. There he stated: "The situation of the division has been very serious lately. In almost every regiment, gangs of bandits have definitely settled down, making strong nests for themselves there, with whom it is necessary to wage the most decisive struggle, because now, taking our army to the rear, they are doing something terrible along the way: they rob, rape, kill and set fire to even at home. In particular, all this is manifested in relation to the Jewish population, there is almost no place where there are no Jewish victims who are completely innocent. The reason for all these phenomena are the following facts: firstly, this evil has been brewing in the division for a long time, and at one time no measures were taken to prevent it. This is a deceitful policy of the military commissars, at a time when they assured in their political reports that everything was going well in the units, this was not the case in reality. An example of this is the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, numbering up to 400 communists, but this is only on paper - their not in life.

The unconscious gangster mass, which does not lend itself to absolutely political processing, remains completely unpunished. An example of when I handed over those responsible for the wounding of the Military Commissar of the 31st Cavalry Regiment Comrade. Kuznetsov to the Revolutionary Military Tribunal, then instead of the criminals suffering due punishment, they were not only not convicted by the Revolutionary Tribunal, but even acquitted, and were returned back to the brigade, like the criminals for the murder of the Military Commissar, comrade. Zhukov, which happened before me. The consequence of such actions was the murder of Comrade. Shepelev. Considering all of the above, I am taking all possible measures on my part to bring the division into proper condition, but still I find that I alone am unable to cope now, and therefore I propose to equip an expeditionary detachment as soon as possible to remove all bandit

elements and hiding agents of Petlyura, Wrangel and the White Poles, because, otherwise, the division will soon, in its larger composition, be able to serve as a good replenishment for those gangs against which we are now going to fight. Although the military commissar repeated the on-duty phrase about the agents of Petliura, Wrangel and the White Poles, he nevertheless admitted that the cavalry commanders did not stop banditry, that the military commissars embellished the state of affairs in their reports, that the majority of communists in the Cavalry were fake, just for show. The decomposition of the Cavalry, which was taking place before our eyes, threatening to turn into an anti-Soviet uprising, forced the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry to take tough measures. On October 9, Budyonny and Voroshilov issued a draconian order: to disarm and disband three regiments (31st, 32nd, 33rd) of the 6th division, "stained with unheard-of shame and crime", and all "murderers, thugs, bandits, provocateurs and accomplices" immediately arrested and put on trial. In the order, in particular, the responsibility for organizing robberies and murders was assigned to "bandits, robbers, provocateurs and enemy spies." A telegram was sent to Trotsky, Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, Commander-in-Chief Kamenev, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Lenin, and Frunze, commander of the Southern Front, stating that they had dealt with the rebels and bandits on their own: "On October 11, at the station. Olypanitsa regiments of the 31st, 32nd and 33rd sixth cavalry divisions, surrounded by a special cavalry brigade with an artillery division and two armored trains, were disarmed and disbanded. In total, 368 people were arrested from the personnel of the 6th Cavalry Division. 40 people were shot even before the arrival of the Moscow commission. Approximately 300 more deserted to escape the trial.

At the Joint meeting of representatives of the Central Committee of the RCP (b) and members of the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry Army on October 14, 1920, Voroshilov reported, already realizing that the worst was over. The rebellion was suppressed, the marauders and rioters were feared, the Cavalry was again under the control of the Revolutionary Military Council. The meeting was attended by Kalinin, Budyonny, Kamenev, Voroshilov, Minin, Semashko, Evdokimov, Lunacharsky

Ganshin. Kliment Efremovich, in order to justify himself as convincingly as possible, began from afar: "As you know, the 1st cavalry was moved to the Polish front from Maikop, by order of the Commander-in-Chief and the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic; comrade Budyonny and I were summoned to Moscow ... We managed very little in Moscow, apart from, of course, personal pleasures, but when we returned, we noticed that not everything was safe in the army ... It was announced that we were going to the front to fight with the Poles in order to take "Paris", as some people put it... The Red Army began to ask for a vacation. A whole pilgrimage began to let them go home. The interim command failed to cope with the situation; the fighters, not receiving vacations, began to release themselves ... The rest were indignant both at those who released themselves and at those who did not let go ... When we arrived in Rostov, there, under the general mood, the slogan was put forward by negative elements: "the release of Dumenko, who was sitting at that time in prison "... There is no need to talk about the battles on the Polish front ... I want to touch on a brief history of our movement on the Polish front, so that it becomes clear the situation in which our army is now. As we walked forward, the mood was excellent. When the moment of withdrawal arrived, by this time the army had reached the highest tension and overwork. It was necessary to immediately withdraw, at least in separate parts, for rest or to pour in new fresh large replenishments in order to make it possible to arrange a respite on

the spot. This was not done. Elements opposed immediately raised their heads. In addition, along the way there was a replenishment of volunteers, of which, as it turned out, there were a lot of rubbish. Especially the 6th division, consisting of volunteers from the Stavropol province - in themselves small-scale property elements, at the beginning of the withdrawal, a core of bandits turned out. For the first time on September 23-24, we learned that not all was well in the 6th division. This division remained at a distance of 80-100 versts from us, and we, being in the main units, did not even suspect that anything was going on

was. And those vile pogroms that began in the division were unexpected. But we quickly found out everything, and immediately measures were taken. To the question of one of the members of the commission: "You say that you took measures immediately. Why were the bandit regiments disbanded only two weeks later?", Voroshilov, not at all embarrassed, replied: "We could not immediately take drastic decisive measures. In other divisions, the general objective situation was the same. Only subjectively the composition there was better. Therefore, it took about 2 weeks of preparatory work, during which terrible outrages were happening in the 6th division ... It was a guillotine; we knew that a purge was needed, but for this purge behind us it was necessary to have strength, it was necessary to have units that, if necessary, would begin to shoot. The division by this time was two-thirds of the bandits ... As you know, the division commissar was killed. Having prepared, on the 9th an order was issued from the Revolutionary Military Council, and on the 11th an operation was carried out on the division. The division was concentrated in the village of Olshaniki. It was ordered to build a division near the railroad line. But the bandits did not yawn, hence we can conclude that they had an excellent organization - the bandits did not appear, and the division was not built at full strength. Of those regiments that were the most soiled, approximately fifty percent were built Despite the order of the Revolutionary Military Council to line up on foot, they arrived on horseback, and some even remained on horseback under the guise of horsemen. But we immediately saw that there were too many grooms. When we arrived, it was immediately ordered to cover the division from the flanks and rear, and two armored trains stood along the railroad track. Thus, the division was in the ring. It made an amazing impression. All the fighters and command staff did not know what would happen next, and the provocateurs whispered that there would be executions. We demanded that everyone line up. The chief immediately declares that he cannot do anything. To order us ourselves meant to drop prestige. There was a moment wh

certainty that this will not come to pass. We passed through the rows of clean regiments. Tov. Budyonny and I said a few friendly words to them. They said that honest fighters should not be afraid of anything, that they know us, we know them, etc. This immediately brought a new mood. Order was quickly restored, the clean brigades were opposed to the dirty ones. The command was given to "attention". After this Comrade. Minin read the order artistically. The

order of the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry of October 9 clearly shows the state of the army at that time and deserves to be quoted in

full: "We, the Revolutionary Military Council of the First Cavalry Red Army, declare in the name of the Russian Socialist Soviet Workers' and Peasants' Republic:

Listen, honest and red fighters, listen to the commanders and commissars devoted to the end of the labor republic! The 1st Cavalry Army for almost a whole year on various fronts defeated the hordes of the most fierce enemies of the worker-peasant power, was a thunderstorm of the enemy and love and hope for the working people not only in Russia, but also abroad. Her fame thundered especially after the mighty crushing blows at the front against the Polish landowners and capitalists. Surrounded by this glory, the 1st Cavalry Army, in accordance with the order of the Commander-in-Chief, began to withdraw from the battle to bring the units into full order before performing a new special combat mission. Red banners fluttered proudly, sprinkled with the blood of heroes who fell for the holy cause, sprinkled with joyful tears of liberated workers. And suddenly a dirty deed was committed, and a whole series of crimes unheard of in the worker-peasant army. These monstrous atrocities were committed by units of one of the divisions, once also fighting and victorious. Leaving the battle, heading to the rear, the regiments of the 6th Cavalry Division, 31st, 32nd and 33rd, committed a series of pogroms, robberies, violence and murders. These crimes appeared even before the departure. So on September 18, there were 2 bandit raids on the civilian population; September 19 - 3 raids; September 20 - 9 raids; On the 21st - on September 6 and 22 - 2 raids, and in total during these days more

In the town of Lyubar on 29/IX, a robbery and pogrom of the civilian population was carried out, and 60 people were killed. In Priluki, on the night of 2/3/X, there were also robberies, and 12 civilians were wounded, 21 were killed and many women were raped. Women were shamelessly raped in front of everyone, and the girls, like slaves, were dragged away by bandit animals to their wagons. In Vakhnovka 3/X, 20 people were killed, many were wounded, raped, and 18 houses were burned. During the robberies, the criminals did not stop at nothing, and even stole children's underwear from the kids.

Where the criminal

regiments of the recently still glorious 1st Cavalry Army marched, the institutions of Soviet power were destroyed, honest workers quit their jobs and scatter at the mere rumor of the approach of bandit units.

The red rear has been ruined, disorganized, and as a result, the correct supply and leadership of the red armies fighting at the front have been destroyed. The working population, which once greeted the 1st Cavalry Army with rejoicing, now sends curses after it. The name of the first cavalry army is disgraced. Our glorious battle flags are stained with the blood of innocent victims. The enemy rejoices from treacherous help to him and from the decomposition of parts of our army. Having outlined the text of the order at a meeting on October 14, Voroshilov continued: "The order made

a tremendous impression. The guilty were despondent, but the unsullied straightened up, and it was evident from their physiognomy that they condemned their comrades. We felt that we could rely on them. Although we, of course, knew that the real culprits did not come here. After reading the order, they began to carry it out. One of the regiments had a combat banner from the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, brought by comrade. Kalinin. On behalf of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, I announced that the banner handed over from the highest body was being taken away and handed over to a member of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, comrade. Minin. The commander orders the banner to be taken away. This makes an even more amazing impression. Many fighters start crying, straight up sobbing. Here we already felt that the audience is all in our hands. We ordered to lay down their arms, step aside and hand over

unquestioningly, but they hesitated with the issuance. Then we called the command staff aside and ordered to name the instigators. After that, 107 people were handed over, and the fighters promised to present the fugitives. Of the extradited 40 people have already been shot. After that, the regiments were declared disbanded, their weapons were returned to them and it was announced that they were being reduced to a separate brigade. When the fighters got their weapons back, there was no end to the jubilation." The story of the jubilation of the fighters was not too touched by the members of the commission, who listened attentively to Voroshilov.

One of them asked: "What do you mean, the situation is the same in other divisions?" "Yes, there were difficulties in other divisions," Kliment Efremovich admitted. - In the 11th division, there was little start, but it was eliminated in advance. But the operation on the 6th division, of course, made a sobering impression on the rest of the divisions, we need to "pump up" the public now, and you came to us at a very necessary moment. So here's the position. Of course, there was nothing dangerous and terrible, but, of course, the 6th division did a lot of disgrace. We do not know much, because we could not go there. Now, I repeat, the army is absolutely healthy. Her combat readiness, even in the state that was in the 6th division, was not lost, all operational orders were carried out, because they did not put the slaughter of Jews in any connection with military discipline. Then S. K. Minin, a

member of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry, took the floor. He argued: "Comrade Voroshilov, giving a picture of events, lost sight of one important circumstance. The command staff was knocked out in large numbers, and the 6th division, while maintaining its combat effectiveness, was almost a crowd, because

commanders had to be appointed from fighters and the army in this form began to retreat. It should also be noted that the enemy paid special attention to the cavalry army, in the sense of its internal decay. The 6th division, during the retreat, was detained on the Polish front, and, th

presented to itself, it immediately filled with criminal elements...

The day of the operation in the 6th Cavalry Division should be considered the day of a turning point, not in the narrow sense of the word - an increase in combat capability, but a cleansing of unusable elements.

Your arrival is a very happy coincidence with everything that happened. A turning point has already been outlined, we already have 270 people issued as fighters, and cleanup work should begin now. We propose to hold a number of non-party conferences and several days of party work so that the army is washed and perfumed. So your work will have very fertile

ground." The next day, October 15, the commission heard a report from the representative of the Special Department of the Cavalry K. A. Novitsky. In particular, he stated: "Now, after the disarmament of the 6th Cavalry Division, the dark element in the division still remains and is campaigning for the release of the bandits issued by the division. We have very few forces, and if these remaining bandits want, they will be able to recapture the arrested. It should also be noted that our departments must be given the opportunity to deal with the bandits on the spot. We are just on the territory of Makhno ... In the Ekaterinoslav province, 2 prisons of the 1st Cavalry were unloaded. The bandits, knowing that their comrades were in prison, ran ahead and whispered in the army that Budennovites were in such and such a prison. The Budyonovites came and opened the prisons... On the 28th, the Berdichevsk prison was unloaded. It was done the same way as before - under the slogan that the Jews and the

Communists are imprisoning the Budyonovists ... On September 30, at the station where we were standing, the arrested from the Special Department were released by separate bandit-minded units. When we took measures and drove the bandits away, after some time we received information that the regiments of the 2nd brigade of the 11th division were coming towards us. A delegation came and said that the Jews had arrested the Budennovites, and when they wanted to release them, they were fired upon. We explained what was the matter and told them to stop the shelves. But at that time they had already approached the station and were in great perplexity when they saw us instead of the Jews. Then I. V. Bardin, head of the army political department, spoke. H

konarmeytsev: "For three and a half months the army was without respite in the battles. When we start talking about political work, this must be borne in mind ...

"Further, Bardin tried to uncover the causes of negative phenomena among the cavalry soldiers point by point:" BANDITISM. The question that our cavalry was fooling around was all the time ... It was found that this is quite natural, because we do not have organized supplies, and it was necessary to organize the necessary robbery, from which, of course, it is easy to go to robbery, and not necessary. ANTISEMITISM (so in the document. - **B.S.**).

In the same 6th cavalry division, during this time, the commissar staff changed 2-3 times and, of course, with a more low-grade element. The most painful place for us is the squadron commissars. They are usually ordinary fighters, communists, but the communists are very weak, and sometimes they are not

averse to shouting together with the fighters: "beat the Jews!"

Anti-Semitism, as in any peasant army, took place. But anti-Semitism is passive. The slogan "Beat the Jews!" has not yet been heard. For us, there was a serious issue - the attitude towards the prisoners, who were mercilessly killed and stripped. But it was difficult for the political department of the Revolutionary Military Council to fight this ... And in this situation, our army did not receive even a 10th share of the number of political workers that it needed. The first batch of workers - about 200 people, arrived at the end of June, from which it was possible to take some ten or two workers who could carry out work. The second serious detachment - 370 people, but when they began to distribute, only an insignificant part, some two or three dozen, turned out to be suitable, and the rest were either completely unsuitable for the army, or completely sick, deaf, lame ... "- Thus, - Lunacharsky sneered, - three hundred people of deaf-and-dumb agitators ... - Exactly so, - Bardin confirmed. - All these circumstances led to the fact that political work was and is at a very low level. Recently, a party confere

Jews are in power, we simply deprived them of their mandates and allowed them to remain with an advisory vote. We have a perspective only on whether there will be people or not. Then Minin spoke again: "In the situation in which our army was, the rear institutions were constantly torn off, and such a picture turned out that people with broken ribs lay around for several days. Previously, institutions were so neglected that they did not look like Soviet institutions at all. For example, the head of the administrative department was shot for violence, other communists for violating discipline, etc." Minin was supported by Budyonny, who took the floor for the first time in two days. This speech of the commander once again confirmed his reputation as a man of tongue-tied tongue and in expressions not shy:

"But here, back when we passed through this idiotic Ukraine, where the slogan "beat the Jews!" is everywhere, and, besides, very dissatisfied fighters always return from infirmaries. They are treated badly in the infirmaries, there is no help at the stations when returning. And so, turning to one Jewish commandant, to another and not receiving help, or instead of help - swearing, they see that they are abandoned without any contempt, and, returning to the ranks, they bring decay, talking about insults, they say that we fight here, we give our lives, but nobody does anything there."

Further, Semyon Mikhailovich again picked up the win-win theme of the White Guard agents and conspirators: "Of course, on this basis, a criminal hand is deliberately conducting agitation. But we have already made a big step in the eradication of these criminal elements, and now we are all very happy to welcome you, thank you for coming, and we hope that you will work with our fighters, who, spending all their time in blood and battles, see no one and hear little."

In general, the commission was satisfied with the explanations given by the leaders of the Cavalry. "Well, well," Kalinin, the perpetual peacekeeper, said summing up, "it seems to me that the comrades told us in sufficient detail about what happened in the army. They did not hide anything, did not try to hide their

weak sides. I propose to take their reports into account and make the final decision after returning to Moscow, but for now we will move on to solving purely technical issues ... "To intimidate the commander

of the 1st brigade, V.I., the Book was taken into custody. However, already on October 15, the chairman of the visiting session of the revolutionary military tribunal reported to RVS member Minin:

"The hearing of the case of 104 persons of the 6th division in banditry was postponed on the basis of your personal order." And already in November, the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry decided to restore the 6th Cavalry Division, and even with the assignment of the honorary title of Chongarskaya - for distinction in the battles against Wrangel. In his memoirs, Budyonny gave a significantly softened description of these events, laying all the blame for them on the Center, which poorly supplied and replenished the Cavalry, and on the same

"White Guard agents": "On the morning of October 8, I received a telegram from Commander-in-Chief S. S. Kamenev. The Commander-in-Chief proposed, by changing the route of the Cavalry Army, to send it by the shortest route to Berislav, without giving the left flank to the Dnieper, but adhering only to this direction. The previously indicated march speed remained in force. On the same day, a second telegram was received from the Commander-in-Chief, from which we learned that M. I. Kalinin, A. V.

Lunacharsky and N. A. Semashko would soon arrive at Konnaya. At the direction

of V. I. Lenin, Commander-in-Chief S. S. Kamenev urgently left for the front. We continued to receive reserves. The 3rd Cavalry Regiment arrived to replenish the 4th Cavalry Division.

Replenishment came to the Lubna region - 3,000 people without horses.

By order of the Commander-in-Chief, 2,000 horses were delivered to us from the Moscow region, 2,000 from the

Orel region, and 1,000 from Samara. The weather was still unusually cold, and the uniforms and shoes of the fighters were frayed. Food and fodder are running out. We had stocks of food and fodder in Elisavetgrad, but they were intended to provide for the army during its battles with Wrangel, and therefore we could not yet spend them. Immediately reporting to the Revolutionary I

permission to carry out harvesting on the spot, in Lubensky and Khorolsky counties. Before that, with the same request, I turned to the People's Commissariat for Food of Ukraine. The preparations seemed to be allowed, but in reality the People's Commissariat of Food did not help, but even interfered. In the Poltava province, it was generally forbidden to produce harvesting. At the same time, I asked to expedite the dispatch to the Kremenchug region of 2,000 saddles loaded at our request, 2,000 checkers and a train with warm uniforms and fuel. On October 9, A. S. Zotov reported to me about a very unpleasant event, which alarmed us and required the adoption of the most decisive measures. And here's what happened. In one of the units (she was the last to leave the battle and lagged behind the main forces of the army), riots broke out: some soldiers refused to follow orders, declaring that they and their horses were tired, their clothes and shoes were frayed. The commanders were blamed for this. Under the influence of the White Guard agents who made their way into the division, several acts of violence and robbery were committed.

On September 28, they killed the military commissar of the 6th division

Georgy Georgievich Shepelev ... Having received this information, I immediately went to the scene. This unit enjoyed well-deserved military glory. More than once she distinguished herself in battles on the Polish front. But, as I have already said, the enemies did everything to weaken the Cavalry Army, which was formidable to them. Under the guise of volunteers, enemy agents, saboteurs penetrated into her divisions. They were tasked with provoking pogroms of the local population, robberies, involving as many fighters as possible from among the illiterate, politically backward, thereby forcing the command to apply repressive measures to the guilty, which could cause anger of the fighters against the commanders. The provocateurs hoped that the fall in discipline in the Red troops, the participation of fighters in robberies, and looting would undermine the population's faith in the Red Army. Sometimes White Guard agents, dressed in our military uniform, appear

robberies, tales were told about the "atrocities" allegedly perpetrated by the Red Army. Enemy agents also carried out intensified subversive work among the population of the front line, into which the scouts did not have to work hard. At that time, especially in the frontline zone, the organs of Soviet power in the localities were weak, and in a number of areas they were completely destroyed by bandits. The party stratum in some divisions was very small, and not because the ranks of the party were not growing. Until the end, the Communists, loyal to Soviet power, were always ahead in battle, fought to the last breath, not sparing their blood and life. And a significant part of them were out of action. Unrest in this unit began even before it left the battlefield. In the period from 18 to 22 September, the bandits organized several robbery attacks on the civilian population. All participants in these raids, fearing punishment for their crimes, went into bandit gangs. The withdrawal of the unit from the battle unleashed the hands of the criminal elements even more. And the command staff did not take decisive measures to stop the atrocities. We repeatedly pointed out to the commander of the unit that there were frequent violations of discipline. He then assured: - Comrade commander, you can rely on me and my people as on yourself. It's true, some people violated the order and discipline, but now it's over. However, the commander did not fulfill his promises. He had one major flaw for a military man - softness of character. He himself was not distinguished by high demands and, naturally, could not demand this from the commanders subordinate to him. When we pointed out to him the inadmissibility of liberalism, he mirthlessly passed his broad palm over his face, as if brushing off fatigue, and said with a sigh: "So sorry for the fighter, Semyon Mikhailovich. Today he lives, fights for Soviet power. And tomorrow once - and ready ... He died. Listening to him, I often thought: "Oh, softness will let you down. The most dangerous thing is when the commander

replaces it with pity.

The command of the unit, in order to “not wash dirty linen in public”, was silent about what was happening, and the members of the Revolutionary Military Council learned about the crimes committed by the bandits only a few days later, and even then from other sources, and the details of the crimes became clear much later (the “unit commander” described here “- this is, undoubtedly, V. I. The book, since I. R. Apanasenko, as follows from at least the same Babel diary, never suffered from softness. - **B.**

S.). - What do we do? asked Voroshilov, angered by what had happened. -

You know, we will not stroke the head. On

October 9, an emergency meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Army was convened at the field headquarters in Rakitno. At the meeting, the following order was written (hereinafter, the beginning of the above order of October 9 is quoted without any specifics. - **B.S.**). Further, the order cited the facts of the atrocities

committed by the bandits. In order to wash away the shame from the army and prepare it for new victories, the Revolutionary Military Council decided: the regiments stained with shame and crimes, stained with the blood of innocent victims (their numbers were called), after depriving the regiments of awards and distinctions appropriated on behalf of the Workers 'and Peasants' Republic, disarm and disbanded, and their numbers from the list of cavalry regiments of the 1st Cavalry Army should be permanently excluded. All murderers, thugs, bandits, provocateurs and their accomplices must be immediately arrested and

brought to trial by the Extraordinary Military Revolutionary Tribunal.

After the extradition and arrest of the criminal element, the rest of the fighters of the disbanded units should return their weapons and horses. Those who did not appear at the review, who did not fulfill the order as enemies of the Workers 'and Peasants' Republic, should be declared outlaws. I gave the order: to announce the order of the Revolutionary Military Council, to build a unit on the field behind Olyshanitsa on the morning of October 10th. Construction did not take place at the appointed time. Then I suggested to the commander of the unit to build units on foot on October 11 at 10 a.m. in the same place

command staff. I also ordered the commander of the Special Cavalry Brigade, K.I. Luckily, no force was required. On October 11, in the morning, the regiments were built in the indicated place. The

Revolutionary Military Council of the army in full force went to the place. Despite orders to form on foot, many arrived on horseback. Some of the perpetrators of the crimes, fearing severe punishment, left the horses in the forest two hundred meters from the construction site. Some didn't show up at all. I approached the alert formation. One thought drilled through the brain; Will the fighters hand

over their weapons on my command or not? I tried to stay as calm as possible, but inside everything was raging.

Overcoming the excitement, he said to himself: "Calm down! Calmly!" There was a command: "Attention!" S.K. Minin slowly, clearly began to read the order of the Revolutionary Military Council. I followed the formation. The order had its effect. At first, many of the faces were gloomy, with a frozen expression of anger, while others lowered their eyes. When Minin began to list the atrocities committed by the bandits against the civilian population, the heads of some began to rise, their faces reflected stern determination. The heads of others sank even lower. At that moment, someone shouted

hysterically: - Yes, what to

listen to, shoot them! A group of riders jumped out of the forest, each with a free horse on his leash. The riders

galloped up to the lined up and tried to hand over the free horses to those to whom

they belonged. The line trembled for a moment, someone tried to get on the horse, someone was pulled off the saddle. It seemed to me that in this turmoil it was about to come to hand-to-hand combat. Fortunately, nothing happened. A group of riders who had arrived, and with it another dozen fighters involved in crimes, galloped off into the forest. After my commands "Equal!" and "Attention!" the cavalrymen remained standing still, and S.K. Minin continued reading the

order. The decisive moments have arrived. "Submit or not? I was worried. Will t

to do?" However, there was no time to lose. I give the command: -

Surrender the combat banners and banners of the All-Russian Central Executive

Committee, awarded for military merit! After a noticeable hesitation, the standard-bearers move from their place and bring the banners to me. I see

tears in the eyes

of the soldiers. Another team: - Put down your weapon! The words were spoken in complete silence. They were heard by everyone in the ranks, they rolled up to the forest and echoed in it. There came a moment of waiting, I will not hide

the most, perhaps, the most difficult in my life. But here the first line, as it were, began to break. The fighters, leaning unfriendly, carefully placed on the ground, each near him, checkers,

carbines. The second line did the same. I notice individual motionless figures of fighters, on whose faces anger is reflected. But these loners, although with weapons, were now powerless against the vast majority of the already

unarmed cavalymen. And then something happened that neither I nor the members of the Revolutionary Military Council K. E. Voroshilov and S. K. Minin did not expect. First, a heavy sigh went through the rows, then sobs were heard. I seldom saw men weeping uncontrollably.

Men's tears, apparently, are not in vain called stingy. For a moment, I was numb: standing in front of me were combat cavalymen, who many times had to be led into the attack on horseback and on foot, from whom the enemy fled so that only their heels sparkled, they stand and, not embarrassed by each other, cry. And among the crying fighters, having lost their arrogance, criminals who have not laid down their arms look

around like wolves. I address with a brief speech to those who have just surrendered their weapons: - Is it you, comrades, who until recently, under these legendary banners, smashed the White Poles? Eh, it's bad when a fighter doesn't have a soul, but a little soul, and when his heart trembled. And where did it falter? Not in battle, when an enemy bullet could knock you off your saddle, but in peacetime, when you succumbed to enemy agitation, you betrayed the cause of the revolution!

I paused, looking at the culprits. Heads lowered even lower. Someone shouted: "Why mess around with them!" Against the wall, comrade commander! It's easy to say - to the wall. Among the perpetrators, most of those who became accomplices of the crime through thoughtlessness. They need to be deeply aware of their guilt. "Comrades," I continued, "the Republic of Soviets, our beloved Russia, is going through what may be its most difficult time. The enemy wants to shackle our sons and mothers again, you and me. The enemy is betting on Wrangel. The Black Baron is armed to the teeth. Lenin, the Motherland calls us to a decisive struggle. So won't we, the sons of our Fatherland, stand up for the Republic of Soviets? Let's stand! And we will fight to the last breath, and if necessary, we will give our lives in the name of freedom and happiness of the working people!.. Fighters in fierce battles with the enemy showed miracles of courage and heroism. And now there are traitors in their ranks. They have tarnished your military honor and glory, and this shame can only be washed away by honest, selfless service and your own blood in the name of the cause of the revolution. Remember this. Any questions? No? Then I order here and without fail now to extradite the instigators. Silence fell over the field. Some of those involved in robberies and murders tried to break through the line and go into the forest. But it's too late. The formation was broken for several minutes, a short fight - and the fighters disarmed the bandits. It's like a stone has been lifted from my shoulders. Again I appeal to the fighters and commanders. I urge them to restore military glory in the upcoming battles against the Wrangels, to be loyal to the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet government. In conclusion, I say: - The battle flags will remain at the headquarters of the army until again, as before, your military glory thunders on the battlefields! I see that all the horsemen listen to me attentively, and I myself have cheered up, my confidence has increased. Now I loudly give the command: - Take up arms!

The astonished eyes of the fighters stared at me. Another second and I understood everything. The Cavalrymen do not believe that I, the commander, who scolded them a few minutes ago, suddenly allowed them to take weapons. I had to repeat the command. This time it was performed unanimously by everyone as one person. At this time, several dozen fighters rushed into the forest. Voroshilov and I are perplexed: what is the matter? Did the fighters decide to run away? Meanwhile, shots were heard from the forest. Soon our confusion dissipated. It turned out that there was a group of the most rabid bandits in the forest, which did not come out to build, but watched us all the time. The fighters chased after her. The criminals rushed to their heels, they opened fire on them. Several people were killed, the rest were caught and disarmed. The events in the 6th Cavalry Division excited me to the core. It was a shame that this happened in the cavalry division, whose fighters until recently courageously and mercilessly smashed the enemy. And I was especially upset by the fact that this happened before the decisive battles with Wrangel. That day I walked gloomy and oppressed. We held a meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council, at which we carefully discussed what caused such a serious incident. Warmly, passionately each of us spoke. And almost everyone suggested taking the most severe measures against those who tarnished the honor of a revolutionary fighter. "Special fault in everything that happened lies with the commander of the unit," the commander of the 11th Morozov said excitedly (all commanders and military commissars were invited to the meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council). - I will not be unfounded. Now, more than ever, it is necessary to show increased attention to the fighters: to talk with them more often, to find out what is in a person's soul, what thoughts overcome him. And the comrade ... is burdened by this, you rarely see him with subordinates. Dnevka - he is not with the horsemen, but in a separate hut, you see, he needs to create peace. And it is clear to everyone that the farther the commander leaves the fighter, the greater the likelihood that understand.

- We will judge everyone who dishonored the revolutionary banner of the First Cavalry! Voroshilov summed up the discussion.

We knew that by speaking out loud about the disorder in our units, we were giving food to the enemy. But to be honest about mistakes is to strengthen one's ranks, not to weaken them. The Revolutionary Military Council of the Army decided to remove the commanders responsible for the incident from their positions and bring them to trial by the Revolutionary Military Tribunal. Of course, Budyonny somewhat ennobled the unsightly picture. He mentioned the atrocities in passing, without specifying them at all. He did not mention a word about the Jews at all—at the time of the publication of *The Path Traveled*, the Jewish topic in the USSR was under a de facto ban. And more and more he rested on the lack of supplies, the bad attitude towards the cavalymen from the rear services and the intrigues of enemy agents. But the agents of the same Wrangel, by the way, had no idea about the outrages that were happening in the First Cavalry, had no idea. Otherwise, you see, the Wrangelites would have cheered up and much more resolutely would have tried to cling to Northern Tavia. But Semyon Mikhailovich devoted as much space to the operation itself to disarm the rebellious 6th division as he devoted to large cavalry battles. And this is no coincidence. It must be admitted that Budyonny prepared and conducted it in an exemplary manner. Only now he did not dare to mention armored trains in his memoirs. But the reader should already have realized how serious the matter was. And Semyon Mikhailovich was truly proud of the fact that he managed to curb the rebels so quickly and deftly. It was, after all, another one of his "finest hour". If it had not been possible to cope with the 6th Cavalry Division, the entire Cavalry could have rebelled. And that would have been worse than the Kronstadt rebellion - after all, Wrangel was still sitting in the Crimea and Northern Tavia. And in this case, Semyon Mikhailovich's choice would be, frankly, unenviable. It would be possible, of course, to lead the rebellion yourself under the slogan "Kill the Jews and the Communists!". Budyonny himself, as we have already seen from his speech at the joint meeting of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry and the commission sent from Moscow, did not particularly favor the Jews, like the vast majority of the Cavalrymen. But he never allowed

I have long understood that with the Soviet government it is necessary to behave very carefully. And the three-year experience of the Civil War taught him that anti-Soviet uprisings invariably end in failure. So the commander of the First Cavalry would never have risked going to extract the dubious laurels of Old Man Makhno or the leader of the peasant uprising in the Tambov region Antonov. But even if Budyonny had stayed away from a possible uprising of the Cavalry, they would not have patted him on the head anyway. Semyon Mikhailovich was needed by the Soviet government insofar as the Red Army masses followed him. If the horsemen would have turned their backs on Budyonny, for the Bolsheviks he would have turned into ballast. He could easily be accused of "counter-revolutionary sentiments" and condoning robberies and pogroms and shot, like Dumenko or, later, Mironov. Or, at best, they would be transferred to some insignificant position that meant the end of a career. It seems that Budyonny at that moment was well aware of how much was at stake. He understood that if he did not deal mercilessly with the bandits in the Cavalry, he would forever lose the trust of the political leadership. But at the same time, Semyon Mikhailovich felt that the massacre of the recalcitrant must be carried out in such a way as not to lose the trust of either the punished themselves (of course, those who survived) or other cavalrymen. It was necessary to shoot several dozen instigators - both to intimidate the rest, and in order to demonstrate to the commission that arrived from Moscow that the Revolutionary Military Council of the Cavalry was resolutely fighting banditry. But the rest, including commanders, he preferred to pardon and give the opportunity to earn forgiveness in new battles. Colonel-General Budyonny, Colonel-General Oka Gorodovikov, testified many years after the Civil War: "The father of his people

did not give up."

And here the legend about enemy agents, allegedly responsible primarily for pogroms and murders, helped a lot. A Russian person, like, probably, representatives of other peoples, does not like to plead guilty to anything, and even more so - to robberies, murders, violence. Where is the best place to transfer

responsibility for some external enemies. Budyonny and Voroshilov knew this folk psychology very well, and Semyon Mikhailovich used the argument about enemy agents in full. The cavalymen, not too burdened with education and critical thinking, willingly believed the commander that the "agents of Wrangel and Petliura" were to blame for everything, and even enthusiastically betrayed the instigators, who were obviously destined for the role of these agents and partly shot even before the arrival of the Moscow commission. But if the 6th division

had not obeyed the order of the Revolutionary Military Council, and the soldiers of the Special Cavalry Brigade had refused to shoot at the rebels and, worse, would have gone over to their side ... Probably, at the mere thought of such a development of events, Budyonny would have goosebumps. But it

passed. I repeat once again that Semyon Mikhailovich was tongue-tied. But it was he, and not Voroshilov, who knew how to make the fighters obey their will, which he brilliantly demonstrated on October 11 during the disarmament of the 6th division. Probably, in the intonations of his voice, in the very appearance of the brave dragoon non-commissioned officer with a magnificent mustache, there was something that bewitchingly acted on the fighters.

Something

elusive that neither photographs nor memoirs convey. It is worth noting that there is a lot of cunning about the Moscow commission itself in Budyonny's memoirs. From the third volume of *The Path Traveled*, one can understand that the commission consisted of only three people - Kalinin, Lunacharsky and Semashko. It seems that it is possible to explain why Kamenev and Preobrazhensky, who participated in anti-Stalinist oppositions and by the time of the publication of their memoirs, had not been rehabilitated either in court or in the party order, dropped out of its members (their rehabilitation took place only during the years of perestroika). However, why did Budyonny miss the completely orthodox Leninist-Stalinist D. I.

Kursky, who was not involved in any oppositions and who died safely in Moscow back in 1932? Here's why. The dearest Dmitry Ivanovich had a bad position - People's Commissar of Justice. The arrival of

Lunacharsky could well be explained by the fact that he was preoccupied with staging